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PAST HOURS

ADELAIDE KEMBLE







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PAST HOURS.



PAST HOURS.

BY

ADELAIDE SARTORIS

(ADELAIDE KEMBLE).

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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RECOLLECTIONS OF THE
LIFE OF JOSEPH HEYWOOD,
AND SOME OF HIS THOUGHTS ABOUT
MUSIC.

VOL. II.

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RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LIFE OF
JOSEPH HEYWOOD, AND SOME OF
HIS THOUGHTS ABOUT MUSIC.

WHENEVER in the heat of musical argument I have allowed myself to give way to those common expressions of discontented old age, "Nowadays" and "In my time," a visitation of doubting and profound humility succeeds, in which I am tempted to set down half my opinions to the intolerance of my advancing years, so naturally averse to change—alas! even averse to improvement that includes change.

After all, what does that contemptuous "Nowadays" mean? or that "In *my* time," pronounced with such regretful pride? For the most part, only that the clouds are emptied of their light, that the little rose-coloured islands

have become mere violet blots upon a grey sky, that the sun has gone down ; and I endeavour to become resigned to the idea that possibly it is only my own sere and yellow leaf that is at fault, and which makes it a matter of impossibility with me to digest food that the rest of the world finds both palatable and sufficient for nourishment. I then endeavour to console myself with the heroic but uncheerful consideration, that it is doubtless better that I should be a fastidious and cantankerous old man than that the musical taste of my country should be going to the dogs altogether ; and that, provided the sacred fire still burns in many breasts, it matters comparatively but little that upon one small altar a heap of cold white ashes should be lying.

A short stay in London, from which I had come away in a state of grievous discouragement with regard to the cultivation of musical taste in England, had thrown me by turns into these different phases of melancholy, until a day or

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two ago, when I went up to the Court to dine with my friend Lord Winterton. In the evening, his niece, Miss Jane Trevor, played to perfection some of old Sebastian Bach's enchanting dance-music—full of smiles and good faith, of gentle humour and tender fancy. I could have cried for joy, first over the exquisite grace and charm of the things, and then again for joy at finding that I was not the corpse I fancied I had become—that real beauty had the power to stir my depths as much as ever it had done in the ardent years of youthful enthusiasm, and that it was, as I *knew* it was, the utter want of the divine imaginative quality which belongs to all the really great masters, that had made me rebel against that vulgar noise which seems so entirely to have taken the place of better things in the fashionable world of music.

Of the gradual decadence in vocal art within the last thirty years, I had tangible proof the same evening; for in looking through Lady

Jane Trevor's collection of Bellini's music, I found it full of passages which the tenor singers now in vogue would find it next to impossible to master ; and going further back still, and taking up Rossini's opera of "Ricciardo e Zoraide," I discovered that it contained no less than three great tenor parts, the least important of which would be beyond the strength of most of the tenors of the present day, whose powers of vocalization are so limited, that the orchestral accompaniment is generally made to play in unison with the voice every passage at all difficult of execution, so that the noise of the instruments effectually drowns any possible defect on the part of the singer.

These revolutions take place almost imperceptibly to those who remain stationary, and around whom they are working gradually day by day : as for me, I had ample power of comparing the present and the past, for I had been away for a lapse of years, and had heard no

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music in the interval ; there had been nothing to soften the lines of change, nothing with which to bridge over the gulf between what was and is, and I can hardly describe the shock it was to my feelings on my return to Europe to find the true gods overthrown, and horrible idols—creatures of wood and stone—set up in their places. I had left England some five and twenty years ago, as tutor to a family who were going abroad. I was then about twenty-five years old myself, and a passionate lover of music. My father, who was a very poor country curate, with a large number of children, had also a violin ; and I think this instrument, upon which he played very beautifully, was almost as dear to him as any of his children. Certainly, he owed it some gratitude, for it was the one prettiness of a life painted too much in greys ; the only solace of an over-worked, over-burdened existence ; the only consolation he had to fall back upon in the midst of the daily increasing troubles



of a large family, and the difficulties of educating and providing for us all. My poor mother, who was of a nervous, excitable temperament, when we came in with our best—oftenest our only suit of clothes, tattered and soiled, to be repaired as best they might, by those indefatigable fingers of hers ; or when three or four of us were saying our lessons to her, and the baby (the baby seemed a permanent institution at the parsonage) roaring all the while in her arms—would sometimes go almost wild with irritation at hearing the long-drawn-out notes of the violin proceeding placidly by the hour together from my father's little study. "And there he is, whining again!" she would sometimes exclaim, but she never asked him to stop, though she had to cast every sum up three or four times over, whenever the arithmetic and the violin went on together.

Little Mary and myself are the only members of the family who have inherited my father's fondness for music ; and our great delight was

to creep unperceived into the study, and lie hidden in the recess underneath his writing-table, while he stood up playing by the casement that opened upon our little garden—his pale face growing dark and sharp against the twilight, and the carnations giving out all their odour in the quiet evening air. I can never smell a carnation now without hearing my dear father's "Bid me Discourse," or "Sally in our Alley," and those tunes will smell of carnations and feel of evening dew to me, to the last days of my life. The next music which I heard, was when I was sent up to London as a lad of sixteen to complete my education. I was quartered upon Philip Warde, an old friend and schoolfellow of my father's, and attended Westminster School daily.

Philip Warde had a splendid mansion (or at least what seemed so to me after our tiny parsonage) in Bloomsbury Square. He was a well-to-do lawyer, with six children—three boys and

three girls. When I lived there, the eldest boy, Bill, was clerk in a respectable banking-house in the city ; the eldest girl, Susannah, was nineteen—a fair likeness of her father, with the same sweet smile, and the same lovely, *moral* countenance. Emily was sixteen, and little Ursula fourteen. Then came the two small boys, Bob and Harry, who were a good deal younger, and at school away down in the country.

In this house my musical taste was continually fostered and ministered to. Philip Warde, who was a remarkably handsome man of about five and forty, had not only the most winning speaking voice in the world, but also one of the finest basses it was possible to hear. He was altogether a delightful creature—handsome, happy, and good. He had married upon nothing when he was very young, and his plain little wife, who had cheered and supported him through all the troubles and struggles of their early life, loved

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him still in mature age with that sort of passionate adoration that seems generally only to belong to the fervent season of one's youth. They were both blessed with that greatest of all blessings—excellent animal spirits. What jolly Christmas parties we used to have to be sure, when Philip led off "Money-musk" with Mrs. Warde, and we pounded away at "Sir Roger de Coverley" till three in the morning! All that is gone out now, and it is considered the right thing to shuffle about all out of time, as if one could not hear the music, and as if one did not know how to dance, and could not bear it. But in those days, a thing to see were Philip's handsome legs, in tights fitting close to the shape all the way down to the ankle, doing such intricate steps, footing it so daintily to the measure, and every now and then cutting the most lovely capers to excite the admiration of us youngsters. When the clock struck twelve we used to go down to supper—such negus!

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such calvesfoot jelly! such tipsy-cake! I used to think there was nothing like it! Indeed it would have been difficult to find anywhere a happier family circle.

Glee-singing was the music most successfully cultivated in this house: Bill sang tenor, with capital lungs of his own; sweet Susannah Warde was soprano, Emily took the alto, and Philip's deep voice came growling tunefully in, in the depths below, like a magnificent organ. All Calcott's and Horsley's charming glees they used to sing—and quaint old madrigals of another day, that rippled away sunnily like intermingling streams of clearest water: the long habit of singing together, and the kindred quality of the voices, made their execution of this kind of music absolute perfection. Then on Sundays Handel used to be the order of the day. Philip would sing, "Shall I, in Mamre's fertile plain," and sweet Susannah Warde would give us, "What though I trace," and then we always

wound up with, "O ruddier than the cherry," which was Philip's great song, of which his wife was justly proud, and which she always would ask for, saying that though it was not sacred it was Handel, which meant nearly the same thing.

Ah, dear old time! Ah, gentle people! The dark years have divided us, but you are not forgotten.

In Lent, Philip Warde would often take me to the oratorios that used to be given at the great theatres on the Wednesdays and Fridays, which during that season were devoted entirely to musical performances.

My first oratorio was a memorable event in my life: I thought it so then, with life before me—I think it so still, looking back upon it now that I have lived. We were to have the "Israel in Egypt." In general Mr. Warde was punctuality itself, but on this occasion he had been detained by unexpected business, and dinner

was a whole hour later than usual, instead of half an hour earlier, as it was to have been. At every ring of the bell, I, and the girls in their white frocks and blue sashes, dashed out upon the stairs to see if it was the master come home, and at each fresh disappointment I felt almost ready to cry with impatience. I kept looking at the bill, and felt sure that every piece of music I most wished to hear would be over by the time we got there; and indeed it was very late when we reached the theatre, and the performance had long been begun. We flew along the lobby, and hastily taking our places in the dress circle, came in for the concluding bars of a magnificent chorus. After which a little thick-set man, with a light brown wig all over his eyes, a generally common appearance, and most unmistakably Jewish aspect, got up to sing one single line of recitative. He stood with his head well on one side, held his music also on one side, and far out before him, gave a

funny little stamp with his foot, and then proceeded to lay in his provision of breath with such a tremendous shrug of his shoulders and swelling of his chest, that I very nearly burst out laughing.

He said—"But the children of Israel went on dry land"—and then he paused; and every sound was hushed throughout that great space; and then, as if carved out upon the solid stillness, came those three little words, "*Through the sea!*" And our breath failed, and our pulses ceased to beat, and we bent our heads, as all the wonder of the miracle seemed to pass over us with those accents—awful, radiant, resonant, triumphant! He sat down while the whole house thundered its applause. I turned to Philip Warde in speechless agitation. "Braham!" said he, wiping his eyes.

I often afterwards heard this greatest singer of our country, who was, doubtless, among the greatest of any age or country; but although the

stamp of genius was on everything that he did, strangely mixed up with it was a love of gallery popularity, which led him continually into faults of taste. What could exceed the profound pathos of his "Deeper and deeper still"? His "Lash me into madness" still rings through all my fibres : but then again, just at the end of "Waft her, angels," with which he had seemed to lift one into paradise, he must needs roar out an interminable cadence, hideous and vulgar, for which the gods cheered him, but for which in sober truth he deserved to be hissed.

Little Bob and Harry used to find the first parts of these entertainments rather dry work, but would wake up for the third part, which was always miscellaneous, and which I hated : I always used to come down from the sublime altitudes of old Handel upon the dull earth again with a sort of bump ; but they delighted in the lighter music ; and indeed Mr. Braham's singing of such songs as, "When the Lads of the Vil-

lage," "Let us go to Kelvin Grove," "March, march, Ettrick and Teviotdale," and the "Bay of Biscay," was every bit as spirited and fine, as perfect in its accent and expression, as his pathos and dramatic genius were unsurpassed in the greater things he did.

The only friendship I made at Westminster was with little Lord Winterton. He was a sickly little lad of about fourteen, with continual headaches ; and our intimacy grew, first, out of my preventing his being bullied because he could not play much and rough it as the others did,—and then, out of my looking after him, and lending him books when his family were abroad and he broke his arm out sliding and was laid up and lonely.

He had several sisters, of whom he used occasionally to make mention when we had become chums, and who sang most beautifully, according to his account. I used to tell him of our music in Bloomsbury Square, and then he would say

with the most provoking coolness : " Ah, you should hear Lady Jane sing ! " This was his favourite sister, and he often spoke of her when he was ill and I came to sit with him. Once or twice we nearly quarrelled when I was vaunting Miss Warde's singing, and he only remarked with a languid superiority, and as if *he* had heard all the world, " Ah, you haven't heard Lady Jane ! "

The fact was, that about this time I was fast growing out of the mere schoolboy into the sentimental phase of hobbledehoyhood, and Susannah Warde was the first woman whom I was beginning to look upon as a woman.

I had often heard her say, after we had been talking of my dear old father and the life at home, that she thought the perfection of happiness must be to live in a dear little cottage all honeysuckles and carnations, with a gentle-hearted, hard-working country curate for a husband : and forgetful of the years that lay between

us, and fired with a new tumult of almost unacknowledged hopes, I bent all my thoughts towards the church, and implored my father to send me to Oxford. Poor man! He could ill afford to spare the necessary sum of money for this fresh expense, and I fretted myself and my mother nearly into a fever with my anxiety and impatient restlessness. Luckily—I did not think so then—they were not called upon to make the sacrifices they were prepared to make for the fulfilment of my desire.

Just at this time, Susannah went to pay a visit of a month to a married friend of hers who lived at Woolwich; and when next I heard from the Wardes (I was at home at the parsonage then), it was to tell me that she was going to be married to a Captain Knockam Garth. It was not a good marriage in a worldly sense, but they were not worldly people. Philip Warde, who doted on his daughter, was greatly upset when he first heard of the engagement, and rather

inclined to oppose it ; but the mother remembered her own early days, and made her husband remember them, and their own true young love ; and so finally his objections were overruled, and Captain Garth became an accepted lover.

As there was some probability of his regiment being soon ordered upon foreign service, a very few weeks only intervened between the engagement and the marriage. They were very wretched weeks to me, and I shame to say it, in my selfish, jealous passion, I made them so to all around me. I was bitter against the whole world, and sore about everything.

Sometimes I thought with contempt and almost hatred of her for having, as I chose to represent it to myself, sacrificed a true love to the false glitter of position ; while the facts were, that Captain Garth was as poor as a church mouse, and that she had never felt anything for me but the sort of sisterly regard a kind-hearted

young woman of her age, and with brothers of her own, was almost sure to experience for an awkward friendless schoolboy, living in the same house. But this, the true aspect of the matter, was too mortifying to my pride and vanity to be entertained for a single instant, and I preferred thinking myself the victim of a woman's fickleness and treachery: it invested me, in my own eyes at least, with a dignity and importance which were more flattering to my feelings. Sometimes I used to wonder whether she would *dare*—I actually put it so to myself,—whether Susannah would *dare* to bid to her wedding the man she had so deeply wronged. Then as the time grew near and nearer, and no sign came from any of them, I had fits of absolute rage against them all, that in their idiotic delight at what I was pleased to call this *new thing*, I, their old dear friend, was laid by and unremembered. And then my rage all went out suddenly like a spent flame, and I

would lie for hours far away in the fields, crying my heart out for the intolerable aching desolateness, the grievous grievous pain of their having forgotten me. At this time my poor mother, too, became a source of the greatest annoyance to me. My father was a good deal away from the house, and always very absent and preoccupied when he was in it ; but my mother saw well enough that something was going badly with me, I dare say she had even made half a guess at the truth, for in matters of the heart all women—the very dullest—become sharp, and I noticed that she never once mentioned Susannah's name to me. Her tender pity would flow out to me in a thousand little acts of watchful affection ; but any unusual demonstration of this kind only made me imagine that I was looked upon as an object of compassion, and this I resented bitterly, beyond all measure. Then when I had met her warmth with coldness, scaring her into silence either with sullen sarcasm

or savage irritability, and she no longer ventured to take me in her arms and question me, or make troubled remarks upon my white face and feverish hands, she would follow me with tearful looks wherever I moved about the room, until I used to rush from the house in a state of perfect frenzy, that I might escape from the unceasing importunity of those wistful mother's eyes. I was very mad, and very bad, and—God forgive me for it!—I still thought that before the end—the end of all—was consummated, some one must surely take some notice of me. But no! One by one the days passed, and no letter arrived. Then a dreadful day—the date of which I well knew—came too, and rolled heavily away, and still no sign!

Two mornings afterwards a packet was brought to me; it contained a white favour, and a large piece of wedding-cake, and a letter from Mrs. Warde. I tied the favour on our tomcat, and gave the cake to the children; but the letter was

so kind and tender that I could not bring myself to tear it up. It was as follows :—

DEAR JOE,

The marriage is over, and our dear girl has left us. And now that I sit down with her empty chair beside me—that chair where she has sat, our pride and our joy, for so many years—my eyes and my heart are full of tears, and I can't help thinking of you, dear Joe, and writing to you, for I think you will want to hear from some of us to-day ; and as the young ones are all too much excited just at present to settle down quietly to pen and paper, you must put up with my account of matters, though I fear I shall not be able to write quite as cheerfully as I ought. Captain Garth is about thirty-five—just thirteen years older than Susie ; but this I think quite a fault on the right side, especially where the life is likely to be so full of ups and downs and changes and movement. She isn't used to

roughing it much, poor dear! [here a great drop blots the paper] and will want some one who knows how to take care of her as well as to love her.

Captain Garth has a loud, firm voice, and seems, I think, to have a very decided character ; but this is certainly quite an advantage, and probably, after all, only his military way, to which I am not yet used. They are gone to Scarborough for a fortnight, his leave, at present, not extending beyond that time, and then they are to join the regiment, which is stationed at York.

The breakfast went off capitally. There were a number of toasts and speeches : Philip spoke quite beautifully, as he always does ; at least he began beautifully—saying what an honour he thought it for his daughter to be the wife of a brave man ; but when, as he went on, he touched upon all the vicissitudes of a soldier's life, the hardships and the dangers, and often

the long years of exile in distant lands, a thought of all our poor Susie might be exposed to—she who had been so petted and fostered, and kept in cotton all her life—came across him, and he suddenly got as white as a sheet, and could not go on ; and poor Susie, who had kept up wonderfully till then, burst into tears, and jumped up from table, and ran into his arms. I was afraid Captain Garth might be hurt, for he coloured scarlet, and said not a single word. However, uncle James was there, and saved us all ; for he got up and made a first-rate speech, full of puns, which set all the girls laughing, and so we ended better than we began.

You were not forgotten at the breakfast, dear Joe. “Absent friends” were drunk, and then Susie put another drop of wine into her glass, and added, “And here’s dear Joe, and God bless him !” My dear boy, I hope that by-and-by it may be a pleasure and comfort to you to remember this little word. Philip and Susie were

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both very anxious to have you up for the wedding ; but I thought that perhaps you would not care to come to us just then, and said I thought your own people must be wanting you themselves after having been so long without you. I hope you have not been vexed at not hearing from us before, but I thought it better not to write till all was over.

Your truly attached friend,

SARAH WARDE.

And so I burned the white rose she had stuck into my button-hole one day when we had gone to a picnic in Greenwich Park, and the bit of mistletoe under which I had kissed her last Christmas, when we both blushed for the first time, and I felt with a rush of blood to my heart that she had suddenly—all in a single instant—become Eve to me. And I went to my father and told him I had finally made up my mind to give up the church and take to tutoring ; which

would at once relieve him of much anxiety on my account, and for which on the whole I felt myself a great deal better fitted. The fact was, with the loss of Susannah, all ambition was gone out of me ; I had come to my senses, and with them also to the conclusion that the less trouble I gave now in any way the better.

I first got a very satisfactory situation in Cornwall, where I remained for about two years, and then spent the next three years in the family of an Irish gentleman who lived not far from the lovely lake of Killarney. After which I heard of what seemed likely to prove a very good thing if I did not mind India ; and feeling that an entire change was the only thing likely to shake me out of a state of despondency and discouragement that was becoming too habitual with me, I made up my mind to close with the offer which had been made me.

It was a great shock to the people at the

parsonage when I announced my intention to them. But, after all, I had already been away three years in Ireland without ever coming home ; this was to be an absence of only five or six (alas ! it became one of five and twenty ; but at the moment of our decision this was little anticipated), and the remuneration, which was most liberal and to be increased with time, would allow of my sending home annually a considerable sum of money to be devoted to the education of my brothers.

My favourite sister, Mary, was at this time about to become a governess : she was admirably gifted for this career, and had been brought up with a view to it. She knew French fundamentally, though of course she could not speak it : she was, thanks to my father, a very good Latin scholar ; and thanks to her own industry and passion for music, a fair performer on the pianoforte. Our instrument was but a poor one, having belonged to my mother

when she was a girl—she brought it with her to the parsonage when she married my father, and with it her old music-books, a few odd volumes of Beethoven, Haydn, and Mozart—it was all old-fashioned together, but we owed to it some of the happiest moments of our lives.

After failing in one or two attempts to procure a situation for her, one now offered which seemed to promise very favourably ; but the money for her outfit, slender as that was, was not forthcoming just when it was wanted, and could only be got together by keeping the boys at home and on my mother's hands for another year. Now, they had long been of an age to go to school ; but though very good-hearted boys, it was not in the nature of their youth and vigorous temperament not to be somewhat unruly and noisy, and my poor mother, who at her best had never been very strong, had broken down a great deal in the last years, and stood much in need of a rest and quiet that she seemed

but little likely in this life to obtain. My Indian project turning up just at this juncture, solved many of these difficulties in an unlooked-for way, and reconciled us all more or less to the pang of parting.

One day, not long before my departure, as I was running along Bond Street in quest of portmanteaus and hat-boxes, I ran up against a fine, tall, stout young fellow, who, taking hold of me by both shoulders, called out, "Why, hulloa, old fellow, where are you cutting to in such a hurry?" It was little Winterton grown out of all his illnesses and ailments into this magnificent specimen of a man. He was going home to luncheon, and insisted on carrying me along with him to Portman Square. We found his mother at table with a bevy of charming young ladies, to whom I was in turn presented. There was Lady Mary, with her silvery voice and delicate skin; and Lady Caroline, straight and tall, and with something

of a will of her own or I am much mistaken. But indeed I could hardly look at anybody for a vision of loveliness that seemed to brighten the whole room, and that came up to me with a sweet graciousness and a sunny face all dimpling with tender smiles, and holding out both her little hands, said, "How good you were to George! I'm sure he must have talked to you about me—I'm Jane."

Sitting at table with them, drinking porter and eating voraciously, was a stout elderly foreign gentleman with a smooth face and great animation of manner. This was Signor Donzelli, a very famous Italian tenor singer, who had formerly given lessons to the young ladies, and who was only for a few days in England. After luncheon we went upstairs, and Lady Jane and Caroline dragged him to the piano and insisted on his singing. After many entreaties and protestations on one side and the other, he began his most celebrated air out of Rossini's

“Otello,” “Ah si per voi già sento,” but he broke down in the middle, burst out laughing, and seizing them by the hand, exclaimed, “C’est impossible ! vous êtes deux charmantes filles, mais je ne puis pas chanter—je suis trop plein !”

He appeared to have little or no execution, but it was one of the noblest voices I ever heard : a manly, robust, sonorous, low tenor, more like the very high baritones of the present day than anything else. He afterwards sang two or three bits of recitative, which were much finer than the song, which had a little wanted finish, and was rather too uniformly loud to my thinking. The best of all was one that began with the words, “Svanir le voci,” and which they told me was out of an opera called “Norma,” by Bellini. It was a grand piece of declamation : I never heard so perfect an enunciation ; not a word was lost, and the separate syllables beat singly on the ear like so many distinct musical blows.

When I took my leave, they told me they were going to have some music in the evening, and begged me to come and hear it. I inquired if Signor Donzelli was to sing. "Oh no," said Lady Jane. "Ours is only an amateur performance, and Mr. Rivers don't like his singing; he says he bawls too much, and that it is insufferable in a room. You will hear Mr. Rivers to-night. We have no less than four tenors, all so jealous of one another!—Mr. Endersleigh, Mr. Frank Rivers, Mr. Cholmondely, and Lord Manvers; but Mr. Rivers is the best, and we are going to sing a quantity of things he has brought with him from Italy."

As the clock struck ten, I presented myself in Portman Square, and found myself the only man among the ladies, for the guests had not yet begun to arrive, and the gentlemen had not left the dinner-table. The ladies received me very kindly, but I never was more uncomfortable in my life; I felt so thoroughly in the way,

and a fish out of water. There were no subjects of common interest between us—how should there be? Of their habits I knew nothing, and what experience could they possibly have of a life hidden away in the shade like mine? We had exhausted George's health at luncheon, and upon the only topic upon which we could converse—music—I soon found that we did not agree; my early taste had been formed upon the masters almost exclusively cultivated in my own home—Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, and old Corelli,—but with these I found my new friends but little acquainted, although they unhesitatingly pronounced them to be dull and tiresome. I then thought I would try a lighter style, and spoke of Purcell and Dr. Arne, but here I was hardly more successful. Of these composers they were entirely ignorant. I, in my turn, knew nothing whatever of Rossini and the Italian music they delighted in, and so conversation very soon began to flag, and to be filled with a gradually

rising tide of awkward pauses. What made me feel still more embarrassed was the presence of a lady with whom I was not acquainted. I never saw anything more striking than this lady's appearance. She was a beautiful woman of apparently about six or seven and twenty, tall and slight, and with a handsome figure. She had a remarkably small, well-shaped head, with dark hair, eyes, and a wonderful white complexion, with just the very faintest tinge of colour exactly in the right place. I remarked this with admiration to Lady Mary, who replied in her sugary voice and with an odd little laugh, "Yes ; she always puts it in the right place, don't she ?" Her dress was very peculiar, and added to the picturesqueness and brilliancy of her appearance. She wore a scarlet velvet gown, and a magnificent white rose in her bosom.

This person, my dear Lady Jane told me, was one of her cousins, Lady Charlotte Malcolm, or I never could have believed they

could have belonged to the same family, she looked so dreadfully hard and bold ; and she certainly had none of their good breeding or good nature, for having, when I came in first, asked, in so loud a whisper that I couldn't but hear her, who I was, and then remarked that I was a good-looking beast, she declined having me presented to her, and took no further notice of me whatever, beyond putting up her horrid eyeglass at me and giggling upon every observation I addressed to other people ; each time she did so, making me grow as red as the colour of her own gown. Before the people came, I was taken through the rooms by Lady Caroline and Lady Jane. I think they were rather ashamed of their cousin's bad manners, and very good-naturedly made this an excuse for getting me out of her reach.

This evening in Portman Square was altogether a revelation to me. In the first place I had never seen any house at all like it. I

had been living exiled in a very desolate sort of barracky ruin in Ireland for the last few years, and almost the only civilized social recollections I had were of the dear old house in Bloomsbury ; but this was a very different matter in every respect.

In Bloomsbury we had one good-sized drawing-room, opening with long narrow yellow folding-doors into a back room a good deal smaller. The variety of arrangement, and the quantity of furniture in Portman Square, made it a matter of some anxiety to steer one's way clear on any side. In Bloomsbury we used to have no difficulties of this sort to struggle with : the pianoforte stood against the wall in one room, and a hard little sofa, with a shaped back and scroll end, against the wall in the other : there were only two arm-chairs in each room, and these stood symmetrically on either side the fire-place. In the centre of both rooms was a round table : that in the

Recollections of Joseph Heywood. 39

front drawing-room had a cloth cover of light green stamped with black upon it; the table in the back room had no cloth: it was of dark mahogany, and overspread with pretty little knick-knacks in Bohemian glass and Tunbridge ware. In this room the paper was a rich buff flock; but the paper in the front room was the one I used to admire the most: it had a bright pink ground, with a pattern something between a cathedral window and a gridiron done in gold all over it. How well I recollect the day it was put up, and how splendid I thought it looked when the great glass chandelier was lighted, to try the effect! Miss Bird, the governess, was sent for, with little Ursula, from the school-room, to come and see it; and I remember as if it were yesterday, how she stood before it in her plum-coloured gown, with her red muffedtees and her chilblainy hands clasped, exclaiming rapturously over and over again, "And such a

lovely *idea*, isn't it?" as if that was a charm entirely separate from the paper, and the one she chiefly appreciated.

There were four drawing-rooms in Portman Square—two immense middle ones of grand proportions, with white and gold walls and gorgeous crimson curtains. These were brilliantly lit all round with wax candles, and the pianoforte stood quite out at the end of the largest room of the two. Leading out of this apartment, behind the head of the piano, was what was called the young ladies' study. This was hung with pale sea-green satin of an exquisitely delicate shade. It would be impossible for me to describe it in detail; but I remember that the sofas and chairs—which were of all shapes and sizes, some Liliputian, some Brobdingnagian—were covered with garlands of roses in soft old tapestry-work, which had preserved the liveliest and freshest tints. Against the walls were two cabinets of ebony



inlaid with ivory, and over these hung two noble Sir Joshuas, portraits of ladies of the family. There were also three or four beautiful drawings of Lawrence's, and some charming water-colours by Copley Fielding, and De Wint. The room that was at the other end of the suite, was of circular form, hung with silver grey velvet, and contained about half a dozen first-rate Vandykes. The curtains here were of a deep violet colour, and the furniture, which I admired very much, they told me was old French. There were beautiful inlaid secrétaires, costly bureaux of quaint shape, and at one end a gorgeous old French writing-table, and everywhere, by each luxurious sofa or inviting arm-chair, little inlaid tables of green and brown woods, of the most exquisite forms and workmanship. It was altogether quite different from Bloomsbury, and on the whole, certainly much prettier.

When once the guests began to arrive, they

continued pouring in very quickly, and the rooms were soon filled to suffocation. I was very curious to see Mr. Rivers, whose name was mentioned among them every five minutes—his opinions quoted, and his authority appealed to. It was evident he must be a very important and fashionable person, and I thought he must be some great lord's son at least ; but I found to my surprise that, although he was connected with almost all the noble families of England, he held no rank whatever himself ; he was not even an Honourable. I felt sure I should know him at once, either by his supremely dandified appearance, or by his superior good looks, although how he was to be handsomer than the men already there it was difficult to imagine. For I do not think I ever was so struck with anything as I was with the general beauty of this assembly—both men and women seemed like creatures of another world to me. Now we had only one other pretty girl besides Susannah

Warde in Bloomsbury—Georgina Battersby, her great friend,—and I could not help thinking how dowdy and insignificant she would have looked among these people.

There was one whole family of three sisters and two brothers, who, when they came in, quite took away my breath with the splendour of their appearance. Mrs. Wentworth, with her classical head and straight nose, made one think of "The Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece, where burning Sappho loved and sung." Indeed she might have been Sappho herself, for they told me she was a genius as well as a beauty. Her youngest brother, who was not more than nineteen or twenty years old, was without exception the most radiant human creature I ever beheld. Without being at all unmanly or effeminate, he was as lovely as a woman, and had the voice and smile of an angel: one wondered what this glorious young Greek god was doing, so far away from Olympus.

Then there was cream-coloured Mrs. Henry Wharton, beautiful from "her melancholy eyes divine, the home of woe without a tear," down to the sole of her foot. I never saw anything to equal the shape and colour of her hands, arms, and bust ; but I felt nervously ashamed of looking much her way, her clothing having for the most part resumed itself into a bunch of violets. I mention these merely as some of the most remarkable persons that I saw, for I stood near the door, and I declare that almost every one who came in was handsome, or at least well-looking : all were well grown and had fine skins.

"My dears, hadn't you better begin?" said Lady Winterton, coming up to where I was sitting with her daughters.

"Mr. Rivers isn't come yet, mamma, and we want him for 'Cielo il mio labbro,'" answered Lady Jane.

"Never mind, my dears. It's past eleven

o'clock, and you had better begin with something else," returned her mother.

"Oh, we can't indeed, mamma," said Lady Jane anxiously, adding suddenly, "Oh! there he is—I see him!" as a tall, fair man, with light hair and auburn whiskers, perfectly simply dressed, and carrying a heap of music in his arms, fought his way vigorously up the stairs. He was certainly very good-looking, but that was not what struck me most about him. It was his bright countenance, his air of distinction, and when he spoke the pleasant voice and charm of entire unaffectedness that were so winning.

"Did you ever see such a crowd?" said Lady Winterton, as he wished her good evening.

"Yes, and all standing about, so as to prevent one's being able to stir; so English that is! My dear Lady Winterton, half of it is your fault, because you always will stick tables before

your sofas. Just look at that row of people all standing with their backs to the table, instead of getting in and being quiet, and making room for others. It really must be moved—you lose more than half your space that way. Would you mind——?” he said, looking at me, and in two minutes we had got the obnoxious piece of furniture out of the way against a wall, and four ladies were instantly seated on the hitherto untenanted sofa. Mr. Rivers was so pleased with this result, that he made me go round with him and remove all the other tables. It really was an immense improvement, although I must own I felt rather nervous as we approached one at which three or four elderly ladies and gentlemen were seated, looking over some political caricatures and reviews.

“I’m afraid,” said I, hesitatingly, to Mr. Rivers, “we shan’t be able——” But—

“We’re going to push that table up into the corner, if you don’t mind,” said he, briskly,

lifting the lamp and making off with it as he spoke, leaving the people he addressed in benighted amazement.

"It'll be much better there, won't it?" he said with a smile, as he came back for the table.

One cross-looking old woman, who was not at all inclined to be pleased, waggled her head angrily at him, and said, "I was reading, and I don't think so."

"Oh yes, you do," he replied, with that delightful smile of his. "Besides, you don't want your book now, you know ; you're going to listen to us." And he rolled the table away as he spoke.

Our programme consisted of the following pieces, with none of which I was acquainted :—

"Cielo il mio labbro"—a quartett from Rossini's "Bianca e Faliero," pompous, splendid, and well sung. "Tu vedrai la sventurata"—an air from the "Pirata," by Bellini. This was

sung by Mr. Endersleigh very carefully, but rather through his nose: it was of those good things that do not give one much pleasure. Then came a duet from the same opera, sung by Mr. Rivers and Lady Caroline. They both had very fine voices—he, a brilliant high tenor, and she soprano,—and a degree of cultivation that was quite remarkable.

Mr. Rivers was very nervous and fidgety at first; the person who was to have accompanied the duet, for some reason that I could not catch, did not please him, and he declared he would not sing unless some one else could be got to play. This alteration was with a little difficulty at last effected.

“Do, for heaven’s sake, let us begin: these pauses ruin a concert,” he said, exactly as if the delay had been caused by some one else instead of himself. “I never saw such a horrid public in all my life—all women! It’s quite killing to have to sing to people who won’t ever express



anything. Do applaud, there's a dear good man " (this to me). "I give you my word my mouth's exactly like a clothes-brush ! Mind you play my notes," was his parting injunction to the accompanier, and they started. But he suddenly caught sight of Lady Charlotte Malcolm, who was talking and laughing loud in the front row ; and leaving Lady Caroline with her mouth wide open, singing her solo, he exclaimed, "it's quite impossible to do anything serious with that dreadful giggling going on just opposite one ;" with which observation he went straight across to her, and an animated little interview took place between them, in which I could just catch the words, "Want to converse—boudoir—disturb other people." She would not move, but she held her tongue afterwards, at least whenever Mr. Rivers sang, which I was very glad of, for she had talked incessantly all through poor Mr. Endersleigh's air.

This duet of the " Pirata " appeared to me to

be rather a poor and disjointed composition, with some pretty melodious phrases spotted about here and there over it. I make no doubt it would have been far more effective on the stage, for the words and situation were evidently very dramatic. Not understanding Italian, I didn't of course know what it was about, but it was obviously a desperate love-duet, and highly tragic. Frank Rivers sang it with immense expression, and turned round to me repeatedly with a countenance beaming with delight, to which his remark of "Ain't it so miserable?" made a very comical contrast. After this Mr. Cholmondely sang, "A te, o cara," from the opera of the "Puritani." He had a pretty voice, but I confess I wondered at his self-confidence, for he had not the slightest idea of time; and the accompanier, and those who sang with him, had hard work to follow him. It was a horrid massacre of what appeared to me a charming thing: but many of the ladies seemed enchanted,

and so did he himself ; and one gentleman came up to me and remarked, "It's better than Rubini ; and it's all by ear—he doesn't know a note of music !"

"So I should have imagined," I began to reply, when Lady Jane gave me a nervous little push, and in a low voice imparted to me the information that I was speaking to Mr. William Cholmondely, the younger brother of the gentleman who had just performed.

We then had a duet between Lady Caroline and Lady Jane. This was called "Ebben per mia memoria," and was from Rossini's opera of the "Gazza Ladra." It was sung with feeling, style, and excellent execution, and was altogether more like the work of artists than of amateurs. Lady Jane had a charming mezzo-soprano voice, her sister a brilliant and powerful soprano ; and they understood each other's feeling and manner so well, that their singing together went with the precision of a single

voice. After this, Lord Manvers, a young nobleman with lovely eyes, sat down to accompany himself. Of his performance I really was unable to judge, for he executed nothing in its entirety: he did nothing but warble, with a very sweet voice, little melodious beginnings and endings, and I believe he would have been there to this very hour, exciting the black ire of the other tenors, but for Frank Rivers, who at last, in that irresistible way of his, broke in with, "My dear fellow, sing, or get up; we shall be charmed if you will really sing any one thing through, but if you can't or won't, you'd better get up and let us go on. That kind of thing is so tiresome, and we shan't get through the programme to-night."

After this came a fine thing out of Rossini's "Tancredi," beginning with "M'abbraccia Argirio." This was capitally sung, on the whole, by a Mrs. Harley and Mr. Endersleigh: he, as before, a little melancholy and nasal; but the lady had

fire enough for two. She had been a pupil of Pasta's, and declaimed heroically with a husky mezzo-soprano voice. The duet was succeeded by Bellini's romance of "Ah non creder che pieno," from the "Beatrice di Tenda"—a thing requiring the most perfect finish, which it received at the hands of Mrs. Wilmot, who dropped diamonds and pearls of notes without seeming even to take the trouble to open her mouth. And then we wound up with another frantic love-duet of Donizetti's, by Mr. Rivers and Lady Caroline. This was indeed a most desperate business; Frank Rivers worked himself into a terrible state over it, and again seemed quite enchanted with the misery of the sentiments he was expressing, several times ejaculating at intervals, "O Parisina!" in an agony of grief, and then turning his bright face round to us with an ecstatic smile, and exclaiming, in tones of indescribable comfort, "So wretched, ain't it?"

On the whole, the Rossini music was much the finest of all I heard : it was more shapely and dignified than the rest, and although, in apparent obedience to some Italian canon of operatic form, it stuck on a quick movement at the end of every slow one, there was an expression and character about it which I found wanting in the other composers, whose last movements were almost all trivial and commonplace.

When every one was gone, with the exception of the performers and myself, we all adjourned to the round room, where a charming supper-table covered with flowers and fruits was prepared, and where we all sat down in wild spirits to talk over the concert and the events of the evening. I may say that I had quite an unexpected little success here, for upon Lady Jane speaking of her cousin's insolent airs, and suddenly saying, "If one planted Charlotte, what flower would she come up?" I, who had often played at this child's game at home, and who had not quite

forgiven Lady Charlotte for refusing before my face to be introduced to me, called out at once from the other end of the table, "London Pride!" which was received with general acclamation.

"And what would Jane come up?" asked Lady Caroline.

"Morning-glory," said I, as quick as light, looking at the fair young head opposite to me, crowned with its masses of golden hair: this was also much applauded. But the best of all was when Mr. Cholmondely said—

"And if one planted Frank Rivers, what would he come up?"

"Love-lies-bleeding," said Lord Manvers.

"No, no," cried I, mindful of the "O Parisina!" and all the other agonies: "Love-and-tear-it!"—the name of the country-folk down in our part of the world for that mildest and most innocent of vegetable creatures, the mallow. The instant after I had said it I was afraid Mr. Rivers might be offended with my freedom; but no one

laughed more, and he several times said, "So quick of him, so very droll," with the greatest good nature and with evident enjoyment of the joke.

One more musical treat, and that the greatest, I have to record before my departure for India. This was at the house of Mr. John Grahame, one of our great city merchants, who was nevertheless content to reside in the city. I was invited to spend my last evening with them, and here I heard the glorious music of the "Don Juan" executed from beginning to end with the utmost reverence and care. An able professional man and excellent pianist, the master of the young ladies, accompanied it at the pianoforte. Don Juan was admirably sung by a Mr. Hepworth, a lawyer ; Donna Anna was a professional singer engaged for the occasion ; Donna Elvira, a young German lady, with a magnificent voice, a niece of my host, on a short visit to England ; the youngest daughter of the house was the Zerlina,

and sang her "Batti, batti," charmingly, accompanied quite capitably on the violoncello by an old admiral, an enthusiastic lover of classical music ; the master of the house, who had a fine bass voice and great sense of humour, was our Leporello. Between the acts, Mozart's third sonata in F—the King of sonatas for four hands—was executed by the two eldest daughters of the house to perfection. This was the last music, deserving of the name, that I heard for five and twenty years.

I had gone out as a tutor to India, but in process of time I became acquainted with the head of a large mercantile house there, who recommended me to try business, and made an opening for me in his own establishment. And there I remained, getting on in the world as it is called ; but alas, for what ? I ask myself this question sadly enough now that it is too late.

The first news of importance that I received from home was that of my sister Anna's marriage

to a curate who came to do duty for a short time in a neighbouring parish. He was a widower with seven little children, but Anna wished it, and so an unwilling consent was wrung from my parents. Then followed closely the tidings of my poor mother's death ; this was a heavy blow, and one that I hardly like to speak of even now. Some time after this my brother Walter wrote to inform me of his marriage and departure for Australia, where he was soon joined by my youngest brother Fred. Finally came the announcement of my father's decease from my poor sister Mary, who had been living at home with him and keeping house for him ever since he had become a widower. Her letter was a very pathetic appeal to me to come back to her : she was broken in health, pinched in circumstances, and quite alone in the world ; and so I determined to return to England, to settle down in some quiet little home in the country, and devote the remainder of my life to my

poor Mary, the dear companion of my early years.

At Calcutta I saw Susannah Warde again. She had been for the last twelve years in India, but we had never met. She had still the same sweet smile, but she was dreadfully altered. So much so, that if I had not heard her speak, and seen her smile, I don't think I should have known her again. She had suffered terribly from the climate, which was also telling severely upon her youngest child, a despotic, lead-coloured little urchin of about ten years old. She could not be persuaded to leave her husband and go to England herself, but was full of care and trouble about the boy, and exceedingly anxious to send him over to Europe for his health and education ; and so it ended in my volunteering to take charge of him for her. Out of which arrangement, if any one thinks that I got any sort of satisfaction of a sentimental kind, I beg to state he is entirely mistaken : for

the child has absolutely nothing of my dear old love Susannah ; he is the living image of Knockham Garth ; he has the same hard voice, and the "military manner" that poor Mrs. Warde had never got used to.

Almost the first person I looked up in London was Lord Winterton. I found him an elderly bachelor, a martyr to gout, and obliged to go about in a wheel chair. He was delighted to see me, as cordial and friendly as ever, and he asked Mary and me to come and dine with him. Here I met my old friend, Lady Jane, with her radiant face, and the lustre of her golden hair still undimmed by time : if she was no longer Proserpine, she was Ceres still, and she made me acquainted with another Jane, whom I might have taken to be the same I had left in England five and twenty years ago, so perfect a likeness of her lovely mother was this lovely daughter. Lady Jane was a widow ; she had married a Mr. Trevor, who had died, leaving her with this

girl and a boy, and she now resided entirely with her brother, Lord Winterton.

During the course of the evening I talked over with Winterton my project of finding some little country home in which to settle down with Mary, and early the very next morning I received from him the offer of a charming little cottage quite close to his own fine place in Cornwall. The rent and taxes altogether only came to eighty-four pounds a year, and it is furnished, and has six bedrooms, so we shall always have a spare room for a friend, even while Knockham remains in our charge.

The few days I spent in town at this period were again chiefly devoted to music, of which I was naturally anxious to secure as much as I could, after having been so long deprived of it.

I went to the Italian Opera to hear Mozart's enchanting "Nozze di Figaro." The house was very poorly attended, the stalls and boxes having only a thin sprinkling of people here and there.

The music was sung with shameful carelessness, and the actors did not seem to think it worth while to give themselves the trouble to move. I was quite indignant at this disgraceful indifference ; but was afterwards told that the Italians hate Mozart's music, which they consider tiresome and ineffective, and that, also, in a general way, they seldom take the pains to exert themselves when the house is not full.

To make up for this disappointment, Winton gave me a place in his box a night or two afterwards, to hear an opera which I was told was one of the great works of modern times. I remembered very distinctly the Italian music I had heard years ago—the brilliant effects and grand finish of Rossini, the agreeable vein of melody, somewhat poorly worked out, but always charming in sentiment, of Bellini—and I hoped to have all these delightful old recollections delightfully revived. I declare that, from beginning to end, it was one continual

bang and shriek : such tune as there was, was of the very commonest order, and as for the story, it defied all comprehension, and beggars all description. I only know that there was a husband and wife who bawled a hideous duet at each other, with the veins in their throats swollen till I thought they would burst, and their eyes starting out of their heads at their own screams—and a mother who bawled because she had wanted to burn somebody else's baby, and then by a very unaccountable mistake had put her own baby on the fire instead ; and then there was a man with the most extraordinary lungs I ever heard, who bawled for an hour together at the same pitch because his mother was going to be burned. Possibly there might be a degree of justification in the general unpleasantness of their positions ; but then I ask, why choose fire for the libretto of an opera ? There was at last a moment's respite in a commonplace but rather agreeable little duet towards

the conclusion, where the lady who has burned the children goes to sleep, and therefore is obliged to cease bawling for a few seconds ; and there were two pretty romances sung in lucid intervals by the tenor, one at the beginning, and the other at the end when he is shut up in a tower. But, on the whole, the performance seemed to me very like the idiot's story, "full of sound and fury, and signifying nothing."

Upon consulting the play-bills, I found that for the remainder of the week no music was to be given except by the same composer, so this was my last operatic experience. But I had no reason to complain of any dearth of musical entertainment, for before I left town, far from desiring to seek it, at last my only aspiration became how to escape it. At every house I went to, it was served up as regularly in the evening as the dessert was after dinner, and my life in the morning was made a burden to me between street-singers, German bands, organ-

players, and young ladies practising. I could not even pay my little bill at the newsvendor's without hearing the pianoforte going in the back shop.

Of the music I heard in society, what shall I say? Lady Jane Trevor procured me an invitation for a very fashionable morning concert at the house of one of her friends. Here, standing for two whole hours imbedded, imbrued, and suffocated in ladies' skirts, I heard chorus after chorus sung. The selection in itself was not a very good one, and the execution naturally imperfect enough: for how are twenty or thirty young folks to find time during a frantic London season to rehearse sufficiently often to make their singing together a really satisfactory musical performance? I myself heard the daughter of the house trying to persuade a young friend to join the ranks.

"Do come, dear, we want you so badly."

"But, dear, I don't know the chorus—I have

never even looked at it," objected the young lady addressed.

"Never mind, dear," replied the other; "it will be one more voice, and we are so short of sopranos."

It was one more voice, and a great many more false notes. The solos and duets were all rather audacious; the young gentlemen had ears; at least, I was told of all of them that they sang by ear (which may be a wonder, but is not always a grace), and the young ladies had voices, and with these two elementary qualifications they apparently thought themselves quite warranted in standing up to sing operatic music which it would have taxed even professional singers to accomplish well. They all imitated the public performers of the day, and roared within an inch of their lives; it was a very different matter, both as regards art and culture, to the amateur music I remembered twenty-five years ago. Mrs. Horton, the great performer of

the occasion, lovely to look upon, and possessing, moreover, the gift of a magnificent voice, amused herself with singing one ballad for all the world like a ventriloquist, it was so absurdly and unnaturally piano, and then singing another the whole way through at full stretch, so inexorably loud that one felt positively battered by the notes, which came about one's ears pelt-ing one like a storm of round white billiard balls. Every one seemed enchanted with it, but I confess that to me it appeared simply ridiculous. Lady Jane leaned across and whispered to me, laughing, "I think we did it better in my day," and I heartily agreed with her.

• The only thing that gave me any real pleasure was the performance of a lady with a perfect glory of fair hair, who sat down to the piano and accompanied herself in one of Beethoven's sacred songs. The music was grand, and she sang it admirably. I asked one of my neighbours who she was: "Christian Rupert—Mrs. Rupert,"—

was the answer. "Hasn't she a lovely voice? But it is such a pity she always will sing such tiresome things."

"Too beautiful!" said an enthusiastic lady on the other side. "Mendlesham, isn't it? I do dote upon Mendlesham, don't you? I always say Verdi and Mendlesham—Verdi and Mendlesham—nothing like 'em!"

After every one was gone, little Miss White, whose delicate thread of sound had been entirely swamped in a duet she had sung with a very violent dark gentleman with a tremendous bass voice, was persuaded to let us hear her again, or indeed, as might be said with more justice, to let us hear her for the first time, for before she had literally only been seen to sing. She accompanied herself in a number of little romances which were quite charming—the greatest merit of all being that she understood her own means thoroughly, and never attempted what she could not do to perfection. There was not much

passion, but I declare this absence had become an absolute relief to me, and although the voice was rather thin in quality it had plenty of accent, great *sentiment*, and the most exquisite finish. Mrs. Rupert and herself were the only real artists I heard, and the former is, more's the pity, not to be heard often ; she lives out of town, and therefore is not counted among the regular well-known London musical amateurs. I could not help remembering the affluence of other days. Lady Jane, Lady Caroline, Mrs. Harley, and Mrs. Wilmot—all first-rate, and all habitually singing music that very few professional singers of the present day are at all able to cope with. The same evening, having been invited very kindly to tea by my banker's wife, I had the gratification of hearing her daughter sing, first, the well-known tenor song of "Marta, Marta," from Flotow's opera of the same name, which she had, unfortunately, found some means of adapting to her own voice, and

then, "Non ti scordar di me," the romance of the man in the tower, and then a friend of hers, with a fine contralto voice, gave us "Il balen," the bass song out of the same opera. After these three pieces, I made a futile attempt to depart, but was nailed by the mistress of the house, who would mount guard over the door and kept her eye well upon me, and I was condemned to come back again and listen to what was called a duet—accompanied on the piano by the daughter of the house, and performed, I cannot call it sung, between Miss Whickers, and her own concertina, which took what ought to have been the part sung by the tenor voice. Nothing can ever come up to the extraordinary effect produced by this singular entertainment. Miss Whickers was a middle-aged young lady of fervid temperament, with a short thin eager figure, and a very long red nose ; and what with her own passionate adjurations rendered even more irresistibly comical by her personal appear-

ance, and the heartless, dumb responses, always a little out of time and never quite in tune, of the concertina, with which, apparently, without any rhyme or reason, she would suddenly begin to play an ecstatic sort of game at pitch and toss, I was worked into such a state of nervousness by the ludicrousness of the spectacle that I felt at last as if I must have given way to some extraordinary manifestation or other: dashed down the piano—or flown at the concertina—or kissed Miss Whickers. At the conclusion, while my hostess was for an instant engaged with thanks and applause, I contrived at last to slip out, and as I hurried down, whom should I meet upon the stairs but my old acquaintance Mr. Hepworth. He was grown very old indeed, but he had a marked, peculiar face, and I knew him again at once. I inquired if he had kept his voice and still sang.

“Well, no,” he said; “my boys don’t care much for my music, they think it old-fashioned and dull.”

“Have any of them inherited your fine voice?” said I; “are they at all musical?”

“Yes,” he replied, “the eldest plays waltzes on the cornet-a-piston, and the youngest sings the Christy Minstrel melodies, and accompanies himself on the bones. He does it everywhere; he’s going to do it here to-night: he’s doing it at this very moment at another musical party—that’s why he’s late; but he’ll be doing it here in five minutes. I’m so sorry you won’t hear him.” I couldn’t echo the sentiment, but hastily bade him good-night, and thanked my stars for my escape.

During these ten days in town I seemed to be living in a chronic state of musical burlesque; for after having been stunned and deafened one day by hearing choruses sung in a space for which they never were intended, and were quite unfit, I went on another to an enormous public room to hear trios and quatuors of Beethoven’s and Mozart’s, led by the unrivalled Joachim, and

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some of Beethoven's sonatas played with exquisite delicacy and feeling by Hallé, who, having devoted himself principally to this order of music, executes it to perfection. The public was essentially a non-fashionable one, and, on the whole, behaved and listened very well. But the want of concentration, which is absolutely essential to the perfect enjoyment of this music, called especially *musica di camera*—*chamber music*—made itself painfully felt in this great public hall. How I longed for a magician's wand to make the unwelcome crowd vanish, and to find myself listening to these great men and their great interpreters, comfortably seated in a small space, with about a dozen intimate friends, all animated with the same love and reverence for these heavenly compositions, where the proportions of the room would allow the forte passages really to appear loud, instead of falling feebly and thinly into unlimited space, and where the more delicate and tender inspirations

would receive their full value and charm, and be felt profoundly and mesmerically by an assembly consisting only of a chosen *few*, all tuned to the proper *pitch* of acute sensibility : this fine delight in the hearts of all, forms a subtle atmosphere most propitious to the best efforts of the artists themselves, who, undisturbed by the banging of doors, the audible whispers about places, and the prosaic rustle of non-conducting silks, would give back a hundred-fold what they received.

The fact is, that although this divine art is so generally cultivated, and apparently so much enjoyed, in reality it is neither properly appreciated nor sufficiently revered in England ; in order that it should be so, an early apprenticeship to the highest class of music is absolutely necessary.

If I were the father of a family all the members of it should learn music. Almost all children have naturally good ears, and can

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catch tunes easily ; and, strange to say, they are able to master the mysteries of time much better at an early age than they do later. Both girls and boys should be taught to play upon the pianoforte ; which, although it wants the power of melting one sound into another—that touching human effect that some other instruments possess—is invaluable as bringing almost every variety of music within reach, and permitting one, through arrangements and adaptations, to become acquainted to a certain degree with nearly all the thoughts of the greatest composers. At a more advanced age I would have them learn the grammar of music, thorough-bass and harmony. The knowledge of the principles upon which the greatest men worked, and the examination of the manner in which they worked, would be a study of great interest, and could but add to the admiration with which they were regarded:

Those of my children who might happen to

be great musical geniuses would only build the better for building upon such a foundation ; and those who were not, having been taught by their early studies what real greatness is, and by the same process to comprehend what real littleness is also, in default of the charm of talent would probably achieve that of modesty, and instead of becoming indifferent executants, would resign themselves to being intelligent and understanding listeners—a race of which the world stands greatly in need. And let no one imagine that this is to be accomplished at an undue cost of time which would be better devoted to other things. Much more time is habitually given to an unsuccessful and incomplete musical education than this would require ; good teaching and one hour and a half—no more—of daily practice, made the Miss Grahames the accomplished pianists they were ; and the steady reading of one single line of new music every day would very soon secure to any one

who chose the invaluable power of playing with facility at sight.

When musical education is conducted upon these principles, we shall no longer have music fit only for the theatre brought into our drawing-rooms, and our delicate drawing-room music exiled to places for which it is entirely unsuited. The effeminate slothfulness which makes people content to go on having their ears tickled by the old, beaten, worn-out forms from which such life as they ever possessed has long since departed, and leads them to seek those gratifications which make the least possible demand upon their own intelligence, will give way to the wholesome desire of a nobler pleasure at a nobler price, and they will gradually become willing to give of their best to the right understanding of the works of great men. Our musical entertainments would also undergo a considerable revolution in the matter of their duration ; in proportion as they grew purer in

quality, they would inevitably become curtailed in quantity; for it would be simply a moral and physical impossibility to give of one's best for the same number of consecutive hours that are now consecrated to a something—I will not call it music—which appeals to not one of the higher faculties of our organization.

So, by degrees, our desire to feel and understand would bring with it its own reward, in a fruition of understanding and feeling, daily growing broader, deeper, and finer, until we could not fail to reach at last the most healthy of all musical and moral conditions—that in which we shall love most the thing which is best. Now to love anything sincerely is an act of grace, but to love the best sincerely is a state of grace. We cannot, however, hope to attain to these serene heights without considerable and consistent exertion of our own, for it is undoubtedly with the muscles of our minds as it is with those of our bodies; the healthful

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exercise of them doubles their strength, while those that are not used as they were given to be used, gradually wither away into premature impotence. "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath,"—a saying, the eternal wisdom of which is as universal as it is eternal and which, if true as regards our worldly possessions, is yet more profoundly so as regards the precious faculties of our souls.



JUDITH.

CHAPTER I.

IT struck six by the stable clock, on the 31st August, 1834, as Richard Leslie drove up to the door of Brankleigh Manor House. As is often the case in our moist country, July had been a month of incessant rain; laying the dust, tempering the heat, and preserving all the tender vitality of June to the usually drooping leaves of August. After a three-years' sojourn in the south of Italy, the sight of the dewy pastures, the grand old trees, and all the wonderful freshness of the English green, filled our traveller with delight. The whole road down from London had seemed to him one uninterrupted well-ordered garden; and the air of peace and well-being, the prosperity of the whole

landscape, brought the young man to his journey's end with a sensation of satisfaction in the land to which he belonged, and to himself for belonging to it, not altogether unknown to Britons, travelled and untravelled.

Tall footmen, gorgeously apparelled, opened the door; and a sublime butler, mildly grand and protectingly deferential, ushered him into the library, informing him that Mr. St. John was out upon the farm, and the ladies driving, but that he believed all might soon be expected home.

Left to his own devices, Richard Leslie wandered out across the lawn, along the lime avenue, and into an old-fashioned yew walk, a favourite haunt of his before he went abroad. It was of considerable extent, and in the centre of it, cut out of the solid green, was a rustic arbour, which had often been a pleasant refuge to him when, on former visits, the guests with which the house was peopled were not to his

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mind—a misfortune which befell him in many houses, and perhaps oftener in this than in any other.

As he walked slowly along, dragging his feet through the long grass that he might both hear and feel the soft fresh tangle, sounds from the summer-house reached him that made him stop and listen.

“Sing mourneen ga-dit-thu slaun! slaun!” sang a loud child’s voice, with a shrill, tremulous, prolonged moan upon the last word that went thrilling through Richard Leslie’s fibres as he stood and listened, and that was interrupted by an equally prolonged and dolorous, but less melodious, howl from a dog, which evidently, with the singer, occupied the arbour. “Good darling, to sing so prettily! Now again, my own Boguey—slaun! slaun!” moaned the child, and “Uwhoo” wailed the dog in concert.

“Higher, my own, higher. Screw it up—it

isn't in tune," said the voice, again holding and vibrating upon the last long note; while the dog, with an almost human endeavour, pitched his voice to hers, and at last made the unison perfect. A shower of loving epithets and caresses crowned the successful effort. Richard Leslie crept softly up to the summer-house, and peeped through a crevice in the wall. On the floor knelt a young girl, who might be about twelve years old. Opposite to her, upon a throne of moss, sitting up upon his hind legs, was a brindled mongrel, long in the body, short in the leg, with a broad flat head, eyes that glowed like a couple of living coals, and a row of sharp fangs of dazzling whiteness which made one feel instinctively that it would be better to secure him for a friend than have him for an enemy.

She placed a daisy crown upon his head, and a sceptre of foxglove between his paws, and then, sitting back upon her heels, contemplated

him with ecstasy, exclaiming in accents of rapturous tenderness—

“Oh, darling! how clever you are! Could you really be the devil, darling?”

Richard now burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter. The dog precipitated himself out of the arbour, barking violently, and followed by his alarmed instructress, who found herself suddenly lifted off her feet and kissed very heartily on both cheeks, before she discovered in the unwelcome intruder one who had stood her friend in many childish troubles, and comforted her when there had been none else to comfort her.

“Why Nelly, you absurd little urchin, don't you know your old friend Dick again? Has the southern sun baked me so brown that even the Queen of the Gipsies won't own me? Come here and let me look at you, child. Why, you're not a bit changed—I don't believe you've sprouted half a quarter of an inch in all these years that I have been away.” He took both

her hands, and held her from him, while he looked at her; then, drawing her close to him again, and passing his arm kindly round her shoulder, said, as they walked on together—

“Poor little Nell! I’m glad to see you again. Why, how old are you now, child?”

“Fourteen, Richard,” said the girl.

“Impossible!” returned he; “why, you look short for eleven!”

“But I was eleven when you went, Richard, and it is three long years since then.”

“And what have you been doing with yourself ever since I went? vegetating here the whole time?”

“No, Richard; I have been to schools.”

“What schools?” asked he, amused at the vague plural of the answer.

“Well, I went first to Miss Varney’s, but they sent me away for telling Bessie Connor that my real name was not St. John, but Fane. And so it is, Richard: you know mamma’s name was

Fane, so was poor Angel's too—she was always called 'the beautiful Angel Fane.'"

Richard Leslie's colour deepened through the brown during this speech.

"And then?" said he, after they had walked on in silence for a few minutes.

"Well, then I went to Miss Pritchett's. But the girls used to get up again at night to see me act; and one night, just after the Christmas holidays, Miss Pritchett came in when I was doing *Undine*. I had got such a beautiful tub for the fountain, and was standing on a stool in the middle of it, covered all over with one of the sheets, which hid the stool and made white drapery; and little Emmy Nicholls was down behind, where she couldn't be seen, with several jugs of water, which she was emptying drop by drop into the tub, to make the trickling of the fountain, you know. Well, luckily, the candle was on the drawers within my reach, and the moment we heard Pritchett's door go, I blew

it out, and held the burning wick tight between my fingers, that there shouldn't be any smoke or smell to betray me, standing all the while like a statue breathless on my stool; and I don't believe we should ever have been found out but for Miss Thompson, who always couldn't help crying when I came to "and now farewell, false, but too dear!" and who sobbed so loud under the bedclothes that Miss Pritchett heard her. Dear little Emmy Nicholls lay as still as a stone, though she had taken one of the pitchers into bed with her in the agony of the moment, and the icy water was running all over her. Miss Pritchett said she couldn't think of keeping me after that; so then they sent me to Mrs. Bridgeford's, as that was a serious school, and they thought I should perhaps learn to be better there. But oh, Richard! that was worst of all!" and the little maiden stopped short as if overcome with the recollection of the enormities which she had committed.

“Why, what happened, there, Nell? anything much worse than acting Undine, and catching your death of cold?”

“Well, I am afraid it was much worse, Richard. You must know, that every day Mrs. Bridgeford made us learn a chapter in the Bible by heart, and when it was about Joseph or Samson, or any of the stories, I could always say mine quite perfect; but one day I had to say the first chapter of St. Matthew, all about who begat who, and I couldn't get the names into my head and was turned back twice; and it was a holiday, and we were all to have a treat and take our dinner out into the woods by Furley, and Mrs. Bridgeford shut me up to learn it all by myself, and said I shouldn't go until I had got it quite perfect. And while I sat droning over those dreary names, to make it more lively, instead of saying *begat*, I called it *Bedad*, practising the brogue like old Teddy, the rat-catcher, and when I came to say it to

Mrs. Bridgeford, nothing would come out but 'Obadiah bedad Manasseh.' 'What?' Mrs. Bridgeford said—'What, Miss St. John? What did Obadiah do?' 'Bedad Manasseh,' said I, with the brogue, which I had studied so hard that I couldn't get rid of it. And then her nose began to get scarlet, and to swell as it always did when she was vicious; and screwing up her lips very tight, she said in an awful sort of a low slow whisper, 'Recollect yourself, I beg, Miss St. John. *What* did Obadiah do by Manasseh?' Oh Richard, I was horribly frightened, but I do believe the devil possessed me, for with a sort of wild screech I answered, 'Bedad 'em,' with a greater brogue than ever. And then she sent me to my own room with the Bible for the rest of the day, and I sat at the window and saw all the girls go by, with their cold meat in their little baskets and their nose-gays in their bosoms; and when they had all turned the corner of the lane that leads up into

Furley woods, I got quite desperate ; and oh, Richard ! I ran downstairs into the kitchen, and I stuffed the Bible into the fire, and rapped cook over the knuckles with the poker when she tried to get it out. And so I was sent home again ; and after some time I was placed at Miss Whitehead's. But one of the girls, who had been a pupil at Miss Varney's when I was there, knew me again, and told Miss Whitehead that my name was Fane, and she said she could not let me stay—I wonder why ?—but that it did not much matter, as I couldn't learn anything. And so now I have left school for good, and Mrs. St. John makes Coningsby teach me to do needlework and dress hair ; and Coningsby says that, as I can't learn to be a governess, I must be a lady's maid."

"A *what?*" said Richard.

"A maid—somebody's maid. I think I'd rather be a cook, though, than that."

"I'll speak to Willoughby St. John about it," said Richard Leslie, hastily.

Just then, voices from the lawn, which they were skirting, warned them that the ladies had returned from their drive, and Nell, darting suddenly with her beloved familiar up a dark path which led through the stable buildings to the back entrance of the house, left Richard to present himself to the party alone.

CHAPTER II.

As those who read this book will probably desire to know who the little being was whose position at Brankleigh seemed so anomalous, and whose refractory temper, combined with her apparent incapacity for study, rendered her education a matter of so much difficulty, we will go back a few years, and explain the circumstances which had led to her becoming an inmate of that unhomelike home.

Willoughby St. John had a brother, by some years his elder—Mackworth St. John who had gone into the army early in life, and who had passed the best part of his youth in India.

During his absence, Willoughby St. John had become a rich man ; he had invested largely

and luckily in some newly discovered mines and speculated successfully in many ways : and when Colonel St. John came back to England (about seven years before the commencement of our story) he found his brother in the enjoyment of a large fortune, possessor of Brankleigh Manor House, and just married to Miss Augusta Champion, a lady considerably younger than himself, and the daughter of one of our wealthiest bankers.

People who stay away a long while, had better stay away altogether. It would be difficult to describe the disappointment of the wanderer's return. In his far-off exile, he had had leisure to remember his friends ; in their busy worldly life, they had found time to forget him. The few relations left to him, and to whom he clung with all the affection which those alone can know who for years have thirsted for home and country in a foreign land, appeared to love him in a very placid abstract sort of manner. He was asked

to dinner a few times on his first arrival in London, but having no other stories to tell, he told Indian stories, and they were rather long, and nobody was amused by them, and people didn't care to have him again.

He hurried down to Brankleigh, imagining that there he was to pitch his tent for months—years if he liked ; but after a very short while he found that Brankleigh would never be a home for him. The fair Augusta was vain, hard, unloving and unlovable ; and Willoughby St. John's apathetic indifference about everything, and above all, his entire submission to the little narrow rule of his dry, worldly better half, irritated and disgusted the poor exile. He had come home with a heart overflowing with affection, and a morbid degree of romantic feeling, and people in England did not quite understand or like it : it made demands on them, and they thought it troublesome and rather ridiculous. In short, the place he had known knew

him no longer ; and our poor colonel, feeling himself nothing but a solitary stranger in his native land, and finding time hang heavy on his hands, betook himself to Paris, and established himself in a *pension* there ; made acquaintance with those who lived in the house, and those who dined at the six o'clock *table d'hôte* ; passed his days strolling drearily enough up and down the Boulevards, and his evenings at the small theatres. It was an aimless, profitless, melancholy existence, but soon to be changed by a touch of the great magician's wand into one of new and all-absorbing interest.

Early one soft spring morning, about a week after he had been installed in his new dwelling, the sweet sounds of a fresh young voice floated down to the colonel's apartment, where he lay between waking and sleeping. The music did not rouse him at first—it mingled with his dreams ; and it was not until the servant brought him his hot water, and that he still heard it in

the intervals of the noise the man was making in the room, that he felt certain that he *was* awake, and that somewhere there *was* a woman singing. On, on the young voice went—scales, shakes, exercises, and then the last air of the “*Sonnambula*,” which put the finishing stroke to our poor colonel, who to all his other tendernesses added a passionate love of music. He donned his dressing-gown, and went out upon the balcony to reconnoitre. The sounds came from a small window belonging to the *entresol* immediately above his own apartment.

Every day and at all hours did the sweet bird sing and the colonel listen. There were no new faces at the *table d'hôte* and none of those he was already acquainted with could, by any human possibility, belong to that flexible tender *downy* voice. The most intricate passages were studied with indefatigable perseverance until they were executed with an almost fabulous degree of perfection. Who could she be? The

little window soon engrossed all his thoughts. It looked a happy little window—the sun always seemed to shine upon it. On the sill stood a white double stock and a pot of mignonette, and close beside them hung a bullfinch in a wicker cage.

By dint of constant observation, he ascertained that three persons inhabited this apartment. Sometimes an odd-looking child brought a bit of sugar out to the bird ; and when it began to rain, an old French *bonne* would come and take the cage in ; and once or twice, when the colonel was in luck, a slender tall girl, with what seemed to him the sweetest face on which his eyes had ever rested, had appeared at the window and given some water to the thirsty flowers. Upon inquiry he found that she was English—une demoiselle Fane, who together with her little sister and old *bonne* tenanted the tiny *entresol*, and who was studying singing under one of the most celebrated professors of the day. The mistress of

the house had nothing but good to say of them. They lived entirely alone, and received no visits. They were very poor—"Mais après tout, monsieur, la pauvreté n'est pas un crime," observed the good lady, and the money for their rent was always regularly remitted by Monsieur Guillaume, the French gentleman who had placed them there, and who appeared to be their guardian.

CHAPTER III.

THAT he might the better enjoy the music which had begun to be the event of his life, the colonel used now to have his breakfast set out upon a little table in his balcony, Those were balmy enchanted May mornings when he sat there in the sunshine, little gusts of soft spring wind bringing down to him the delicate scent of the stock and mignonette, mingled with the accents of that voice which seemed white as the stock, fresh as the mignonette, more delicate and tender and fragrant than either. It was a voice of little power or extent : if the windows were shut, the piano quite drowned it ; but it had an indescribable sweetness and touching quality of youth about it, that made the eyes fill as one

listened. The first day that Colonel St. John was sitting out upon his balcony, he heard a voice from above whisper, "Jacky, viens donc voir ! He has got his breakfast on the balcony—he has got rolls, he has got eggs, he has got honey : don't it look good !" Colonel St. John looked up : the child was peeping down at him from above. The old Frenchwoman came for an instant to the window and tried to draw her away, but in vain. She laid her arms upon the window-sill, and leaned her chin upon them, and when the colonel raised his eyes again, he saw her still in the same position, observing him with motionless attention.

She was about seven years old ; her head was large, or seemed so from the heavy masses of auburn hair which were wound round and round it in loose thick braids, that seemed to have neither beginning nor end. The face was square, and of an immovable gravity ; the eyes large and very dark ; they never seemed to wink like

other eyes, but remained steadily fixed upon him with a sort of slow scrutiny, which, combined with the motionlessness of the little figure, made him feel a nervous desire to make her speak, or smile, or move. He looked up and laughed: the wide eyes gazed down at him—preternaturally dark and solemn they looked, peering from underneath those auburn tresses,—but she gave no sign. He kissed his hand: still the sphynx-like face gazed down at him, but immovable, observant, and gravely stern as ever. He held up a bit of sugar, and made signs to her to catch it: she made no answering gesture. He threw it up, and it nearly hit her chin: but she never even flinched or winced, and it fell unheeded back into the courtyard.

The two following days it rained; the window of the *entresol* remained closed, and Colonel St. John breakfasted indoors.

The third morning the May sun shone un-

clouded, and the little table, with its coffee, rolls, and eggs, was again arranged in the balcony. The window above was wide open, and the indefatigable voice at work—scales, trills, solfeggi,—and the bullfinch in an ecstasy of envy, straining every nerve to emulate its mistress. Lo, too, the small sphynx, in the same attitude as when he had last seen her—silent, motionless, intent. He turned his chair away from her as much as possible, with a slight movement of impatience, and began the morning meal; he had, however, not proceeded far with it, before he felt something drop like a pea upon the little cap he wore to protect him from the sun. Before he had time to ascertain what it could be, it was withdrawn, and he became suddenly aware of a piece of string dangling close down by his ear, with a little knot at the end of it, which he then discovered to be the object which had struck his cap. Looking hastily upwards, he saw the child, with the same

grave visage, slowly point to his breakfast. He touched the rolls.

“Do you want one of these, little one?” he said.

She laid her finger on her lips, glanced cautiously back into the room, and then again pointed sternly and imperatively to the table. He touched the rolls again : she shook her head, but the finger still pointed. He touched the butter-dish : another negative with the head, but the finger not withdrawn. There was a plate of the long thin Piedmontese biscuits called *grissini* on the table ; when he showed her these, she nodded repeatedly, with a sort of angry gravity, and vehemently jerked the string close to his ear. Greatly entertained, he fastened the biscuit to the end of the cord, and she drew it up and ate it, apparently with extreme satisfaction, but without ever removing those very uncomfortable eyes from off her benefactor. As soon as she had demolished

her biscuit, she lowered her string again, and recommenced her game of pointing. This time it was for sugar. He fastened a lump to the cord, and saw her presently divide her booty with the bullfinch, after which she withdrew, making no sort of acknowledgment, either of pleasure or of gratitude.

Every day now there appeared some new and tempting dainty on the colonel's table, and every day did his strange little neighbour let down her string and share his good things with him ; never, however, exceeding the quantity she seemed to have prescribed to herself from the beginning. One cake, and one lump of sugar scrupulously halved with the bullfinch, was all he ever could induce her to accept. After a few days she took it into her head to make him little offerings in return ; the string announcing itself by a bang from some parcel more or less heavy with which it was laden. One day it was a bunch of violets ; another

time, a tiny pin-cushion, which, by signs, silent, cautious, but wonderfully intelligent, she made him understand she had worked for him herself; once, a piece of Gruyère cheese descended, carefully enveloped in a hundred bits of paper; and one day there flopped upon his shoulder a square packet of red gold, recklessly shorn from the sunny treasure with which the little head was crowned. She gave him all she could—she gave him all she had. She had got to know his hours, and the time at which he might generally be expected home for dinner, and was always at the window to greet his return with her presence. Still she never smiled nor spoke, and our colonel would probably have never achieved a further degree of intimacy, but for a trouble which befell the little sphynx, and which, as troubles will, taught her to know her friends.

CHAPTER IV.

ONE day when Colonel St. John went to his breakfast, he was very disagreeably surprised at not hearing, as usual, those sounds which he had grown quite accustomed to look upon as the necessary accompaniment of his meal. He looked up in vain for his small friend—the bird was not there, the window was shut. It remained so the next day, and the next. It was a Friday, and Colonel St. John, hurrying out, went to the corner of the street and waited there in a state of unspeakable anxiety. He had discovered that three times a week—on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays,—at about half-past twelve o'clock, the elder of the two girls, accompanied by her little sister and the

old *bonne*, was in the habit of going to take her singing lesson; and he had often stood, where, hidden by a friendly *porte-cochère*, he could see the slim tall girl pass by, in her modest suit of faded black, with her large music-book under her arm. To-day, however, he waited in vain. Half-past twelve—one o'clock—half-past one struck; the colonel turned back again to the *pension* with an indescribable foreboding of ill. He asked the *concierge* for the key of his room, and then inquired if the ladies who occupied the *entresol* had left the *pension*, as he had heard no singing for the last three days.

“Non, monsieur,” was the reply. “Ces dames y sont toujours, mais la petite demoiselle est bien malade, elle a la rougeole.”

The moment Colonel St. John reached his apartment, he seized pen and ink, and wrote the following lines, which he immediately despatched to the floor above.

"A fellow-countryman, hearing that English ladies in the house are alone and in trouble, ventures to offer any assistance that may be in his power. Has the little girl any amusing books? Would she care for pictures? Does she love flowers? Colonel St. John does not know whether he can be of any service, but implores Miss Fane to forget that he is a stranger, and to command him if he can."

In answer to this missive the servant brought back word that Mademoiselle de St. Armand would have the pleasure of coming down and speaking to Monsieur le Colonel herself.

In about ten minutes the ante-room bell rang, the door opened, and Mademoiselle Judith de St. Armand was announced, and, to the unspeakable amazement of the colonel, the little old *bonne* of the *entresol* stood before him, no longer in the striped *camisole* in which he had often caught flying glimpses of her, hurrying

backwards and forwards, sometimes with a pipkin in her hand, sometimes with a broom, engaged in the homely avocations which constituted her daily employment, but rouged up to the eyes, and attired in a faded lilac silk dress, of the scantiest and most antiquated make, and whose short proportions displayed a pair of knotty little feet in elaborately sandalled prunella shoes. Her little withered visage was literally buried in an enormous yellow bonnet, covered with roses; in one hand was an old pink parasol, in the other, she carried a gigantic snuff-box. She ambled rapidly into the room, and then stopping, as it were, with a modest surprise, executed with infinite grace and dignity two or three curtsies worthy of the days of the *menuet de la cour*. In a dialect, half French, half English, which the colonel had considerable difficulty in comprehending, she thanked him with effusion for his kindness, and offered him her snuff-box, repeatedly solacing herself with

its contents, while, in the floweriest language, she informed him that his letter had arrived at the most auspicious moment, and had relieved them from a very painful embarrassment. She told him that ever since the fever had set in, the poor little child had been possessed by a frantic desire to see him ; that they had endeavoured to divert her mind from this strange fancy, but that yesterday, her irritability increasing with her illness, she had refused all nourishment, and met every attempt to soothe or amuse her with passionate cries of “*Je veux le colonel—je veux le colonel.*” Mademoiselle Judith therefore ventured to entreat Monsieur le Colonel, since he had been so kind as to offer to help them, to come up and see the poor little invalid who had taken, how and why they could not imagine, such an extraordinary caprice for him ; at present, after passing a wretched night, she had fallen into a sort of troubled doze, but if towards evening, Monsieur le Colonel would have the

goodness to pay them a little visit, both she and Mademoiselle Fane would feel "éternellement reconnaissantes" for such an act of kindness.

"Have you good medical advice for her?" interrupted the colonel.

"Monsieur, je l'ai purgée," replied Mademoiselle de St. Armand, gravely; then, playfully covering her old visage with one hand while her little diamond eyes twinkled and winked at him through the spread fingers:

"Hah!" said she: "should I have blessed the English conveniences? But you will *forgive*—c'est le cœur qui a parlé." Then taking his hand and tenderly pressing it, the little lady rose to depart, backing out of the room, and repeating at intervals the gracious and majestic obeisances which had adorned her entrance, and which she always apparently directed to an imaginary circle before her. Her dress, her manner, the wonderful grandeur and condescension of her demeanour, the long words she

delighted to use, and the evident desire which she had to impress him with an idea of the importance of the family to which she belonged, left the colonel full of conjectures as to what their position in the world might really be. We will at once tell the reader what he only learned gradually during the course of a growing intimacy.

CHAPTER V.

ANGELA FANE, or as she was always called at home, Angel Fane, and her little sister Judith were the daughters of a gentle, honest, hard-working musician, who was engaged in the orchestra of one of the great London theatres. He had married an Italian woman who sang in the choruses, and who died after bringing the little Judith into the world. In all the distress of their loss, no one had much heeded the poor babe, whose arrival had heralded so terrible a misfortune: her birthday was a day of mourning, and all the joyful celebrations which usually usher in a new life were got over as briefly and unimportantly as possible. She received the name of Elena in memory of her mother, and

that of Judith from the attached friend in whose arms that mother had died, who had held her at the font, and who had tended and nursed the poor forlorn little baby with all the passionate devotion of one who has few to love or to be loved by.

In palmy days of former years, Judith Cabanou had been known as Mademoiselle de St. Armand, and had been rather a successful mime in the old *ballets d'action* which are gone out of fashion now. Have you ever lived among actors? Have you ever known any of them really intimately? Probably not—for those who are not what is called “in society,” live in a little enchanted world of their own, made up of illusions and hard work, into which the inhabitants of the other worlds in the world seldom penetrate; and those whom we occasionally meet in agreeable houses, rarely allow one to pierce much below the surface. All that is better or worse in them than in other men, lies

hidden, and all that you perceive is merely a gentleman very much like other gentlemen, only rather more genial, rather lighter in hand, and perhaps speaking rather better English than most of the other gentlemen at table.

I do not mean such men as —, or — ; we all knew them—they were great artists and exceptional men. How handsome they were! what winning voices they had! A chivalrous quality was theirs too, which made them adored by all weak creatures—women and children loved them. They had something of the humour of vagabonds, something of the fancy of poets, the tastes and habits of *grands seigneurs*, and the manners of most pleasant gentlemen. No—when I talk of actors, I mean the men of their class, who have never risen above it, nor mixed with anything out of it. If you have lived among these people, did you ever know one who had not had one great moment at least in his career?

Every actor—from Hamlet, down to the man who, with a mean throat, knock-knees and a short cloak, acts guest at a ball, or tells my lord duke that his carriage waits—lives and dies in the firm conviction that at some period of his life, his genius has been the sole prop of a falling fabric,—that through his efforts alone, at some time or other, some theatre or other has been rescued from imminent perdition, some author crowned with laurels, due only to *his* interpretation of the drama.

The only one I ever knew who did not nourish this valuable illusion, was a poor fellow who fancied that he could act Shakespeare, and who passed his life in coming out as Romeo. He had an invincible lisp, which used to make the people laugh, and was regularly hooted off the stage whenever he came to the passage, “How thilver thweet thound loverth’ tongueth by night.” He called upon me the day after he had failed at one of the great houses ; he told me in a perfect

frenzy of passion that "both actorth and managerth were in a bathe conthpirathy, thir, to thwamp the greatetht dramatic geniuth that the age had produthed ; but I'll thail for America, thir, by heaventh I will, and leave thith mitherable old huthk of a decrepit world to rot in itth own helplethneth !" Poor fellow ! when I returned to England after a few years absence, I found he had died in a madhouse, of vanity and disappointed ambition.

The triumphal moment in Judith Cabanou's existence had been the production of a ballet, called "La Fiancée de la Montagne," in which, after leaping upon a table and firing off six pistols, thereby putting to flight a whole regiment sent to capture her bandit husband, she suddenly with indescribable rapidity (shedding one dress after another as if they had been so many skins) appeared first in Spanish flounce and mantilla, and pranced a cachucha to an accompaniment of castanets ; then, as a Neapoli-

tan *villanella*, rushed wildly, tambourine in hand, into a tarantella; then danced a *pas Tartare* with clicking heels, aided by the whole *corps de ballet*; and finally, on the dispersion of the middle group by which she had been for an instant surrounded and concealed, was discovered with a turban, which with incredible velocity she had contrived to clap upon her head, balancing herself upon some cushions in an attitude of all but impossible muscular difficulty, grinning and leering topsy-turvy at the pit, in a pose that appeared to set the law of gravity and every other law, natural and conventional, at defiance. This *pose* was the child of her invention; she loved it, and called it "Le Rêve de l'Odalisque;" and she used to go home to her hard bed in her dingy lodging a proud and happy woman, after seeing the curtain fall upon her creation, enveloped in Bengal fires, and pelted with bouquets bought by the manager and herself, amid the plaudits of an enthusiastic if not enlightened public.

But Time, the conqueror, did not spare her. Those fierce bold big bright eyes sank in their orbits, until the eyes and orbits together looked like a huge pair of spectacles. Those legs, so straight, so round, so firm and yet so soft, a perfect model of form, grew thin and stiff, and jerked about like two melancholy little old cork legs. She could not get engagements, and finally accepted the humble *emploi* of dresser, rather than not in any capacity belong to that Garden of Eden of all actors, a theatre. She attached herself warmly to Mrs. Fane, whom she was in the habit of dressing, and when the former left the stage, which she did some short while before the little Judith was born, the poor Cabanou came home with her, and fell at once into the position of friend, nurse, counsellor, and servant in one ; and as Mrs. Fane kept her alive with green-room gossip and the history of all the cabals and intrigues of the players, she contrived for some years to lead a tolerably happy

existence, in spite of what she used pathetically to call "le gout amer des gloires passées."

About a year before the commencement of their acquaintance with Colonel St. John, Mr. Fane had died of consumption, and his situation at the theatre being all he had had to depend upon, his children would have been left entirely destitute, but for a certain Monsieur Guillaume, a lodger in the same house, who, having the greatest opinion of Angel's musical capacity, had come forward in the handsomest manner in the hour of need, had offered to take upon himself the care of the whole family, and had brought them all to Paris, where he had placed Angel under the most celebrated master in the place, merely observing, in the noblest way, that she must work hard, for that to her future triumphs he should look, to repay him for all the money he was expending upon her maintenance and education.

CHAPTER VI.

IN the evening, Colonel St. John rung at the door of the *entresol*, laden with books and toys for the sick child. He found the little home even more humble than the appearance of its inhabitants had led him to expect; but the place, though poor, was bright and cheerful. How should it be otherwise, with sunshine, birds, flowers, and children within it? How should it be otherwise, with sweet Angel Fane within it? How shall I describe this tall, fair child—so very tall, so very fair, so very childlike,—so joyous, gentle, eager, and, alas! so weak, that every little exertion or emotion left her panting and breathless, and overcome with palpitation of the heart? She was only just seventeen, and

already five foot five. Her lithe young figure, too slight to require any artificial support, swayed and bent with every movement, like some tall sapling with the wind. Her face was round, and perfectly colourless, without looking in the least unhealthy. “Non era pallidezza, ma candore.” Her whiteness was not of alabaster, it was like cream, or “pale primroses;” it had the texture and hue of flowers, and was relieved by little unexpected veins of tenderest violet. Her eyes were grey, with long black lashes; sweet eyes, gentle and shy, that twinkled, and seemed almost to vanish away with merriment: add to this, sweet lips often parted to laugh, and showing the whitest, evenest, handsomest teeth in the world, and you have all that I can give of Angel Fane. She had not long recovered from a rheumatic fever, and had been obliged to have her head shaved; so she always wore a little round muslin cap, exactly like a baby’s, fitting to the shape of her head, and whose

snowy frillings sat close round her sweet face, making it look still more delicate and baby-like. The short hair that peeped from beneath the cap was auburn, and threw amber shadows of a vague and exquisite softness upon her temples.

The ice once broken, and the colonel installed by little Judith's bed, he hardly quitted it until she was herself again. She would lie for hours with her little hot hand in his, while he told her interminable stories of giants and fairies ; and though he seldom left her without bringing back something to divert or please her, she hardly would suffer him out of her sight for half an hour together.

The days of her recovery were happy days for these poor children. Attended by the faithful Jacky—that was the familiar name by which Mademoiselle de St. Armand was known in the bosom of her family,—they all went to St. Germain, where the colonel took lodgings for them for a week. Happy days were they, too, for the

poor lone man, whose heart, ice-bound so long, was now fast thawing in a sort of paradise of tenderness. These friendless young things attached themselves very readily and warmly to one whose only thought seemed to be of what might give them pleasure. When they returned to Paris, he passed all his evenings with them. Jacky was always of the party—an uncompromising chaperon, who considered herself arrayed in full evening costume when she had whipped off her apron, and stuck a very old rose in her ragged grey locks. The colonel now had frequent opportunities of hearing Angel sing; and the oftener he heard her, the more impressed did he become with the conviction that she never would possess the physical strength requisite for a public career. How would that thread of a voice, that hardly carried across the room, ever make itself heard in the large space of a theatre? She executed with the precision of an instrument the most difficult and intricate

passages, but besides being deficient in power, she was also entirely deficient in what may sometimes be made to take the place of it—dramatic expression. The passionate Italian music, with which her master crammed her, said absolutely nothing to a nature in which the senses were either non-existent, or entirely dormant; consequently, she could not make it say anything to any one else: her sentiment—such as it was—seemed all to lie in the natural colour of her voice, which in its sweet weakness went straight to one's heart, one knew not how. The whole creature was touching—why, one could not tell, for she was not by any means remarkably intelligent, and anything but sentimental. Essentially light-hearted she was, although taxed above her strength, and never sad except for being scolded by her master, or prevented by Jacky from doing some trifle that everybody else did, and which therefore she always imagined she had strength for, until she

tried it and broke down in the attempt. Perhaps one felt so tender about her, because she always looked younger than any one else; perhaps, too, one had an indistinct foreboding that her thread of life was too fine and delicate for the hard uses of so rough a world.

One evening, that the colonel was as usual sitting with them, he asked Angel to sing him what she was at that moment studying with her master.

"Oh, dear colonel," she said, "don't ask me. I sing it too horridly; and, what is worse, I never shall sing it any better. Monsieur was quite furious with me to-day; he said, '*Vous êtes froide comme une glace*,' several times, and looked so disgusted with me! I suppose I am," she added, with a little laugh, "for though I have been working at it ever since I came home, it doesn't get a bit warmer. There!" she continued, opening the *romanza* of the "*Montecchi e Capuletti*" and showing it to him, "I do pretty

well till I get to this bit, 'Con quale ardor t'attendo!' and then he always goes off in a frenzy. To-day he seized me by the shoulders and shook me, asking me all the while if I had never *attended* any one; and then he called me a *légume*, and looked so desperate and funny, that I could not help giggling, though really I wanted to cry. And that, of course, made him crosser than ever, and he said, 'Allez, je dirai à Monsieur Guillaume que jamais vous ne ferez rien.' But though I really do try, I don't see how to do it a bit more than I did this morning. I never did *attendo* any one but you, dear colonel, and as you are sure to come, I never fuss about it, you know."

"Ah!" said Jacky, "but a day vill côme ven ze cœur vill dire his petit mot."

"I'm sure I don't know how it should," replied Angel, laughing, "unless one of Judy's fairy princes comes down the chimney and carries me off. I don't believe I shall ever have

anything but fathers—and I'm sure I don't want anything else, with two such dear old fathers as Monsieur Guillaume and you, dear colonel!" and she put her hand affectionately into his. Jacky scowled, as she had a peculiar way of doing whenever Monsieur Guillaume's name was mentioned: the colonel smiled a melancholy little smile, looked at the little hand that lay in his—and let it go.

She opened the piano and began: when she came to the passage in question, she stopped, and said, "He sang it himself, too, to show me how it ought to be; but I'm so stupid, I quite forget how he did it. Oh, this was it, I think!" And she sang.

"No it wasn't, Angel," said little Judith, who was busy building card houses in a corner of the room; "I know how it was, and it wasn't so."

"Well then, show us, Judy," said the other girl, "if you know how so well."

"He stops upon 'ardor,' and you don't; and

then he seems glad with a sort of gladness ; and when he begins at first, he is quite sad, and you don't do that right either. This is how he does it."

The little creature stood up in the middle of the room, with her arms crossed upon her breast, in an attitude of profound melancholy. So she sang the first few bars of her song ; then slowly opening her arms with a gesture of strange grace and pathos, she stretched them longingly into the air, while, with glowing cheeks, and her little frame shaking from head to foot with emotion, the words burst forth—"Con quale ardor t'attendo!"

The colonel and Angel went into fits of laughter at the extraordinary energy and passion of the small creature ; but Jacky seized her up in her arms and covered her with tears and kisses, saying, "Laisse-les rire ! tu seras grande—tu seras grande ! Je t'apprendrai le 'Rêve de l'Odalisque !'"

CHAPTER VII.

FROM this time forth, the little Judith's acting became one of the constant entertainments of the evening. One day the colonel would tell her a fairy story, and the next, she would act it for him from beginning to end ; often making her audience laugh, while she herself cried with her own intensity.

The contrast between the two girls was very remarkable ; the complete difference of organization appeared in everything. Jacky informed the colonel that Angel took after her father, while Judith was all her mother—the same fire, the same passion, the same natural gift of acting, which seems only to belong to southern

people. The one single, common inheritance appeared to be the auburn hair, which came to both from the English side : but even here there was a difference in the very temper of the hair ; Angel's being so soft and fine that it could do nothing but lie flat ; while the little Judith's, if unbound, stood up and out miles away from her head in crisp waves that made it look like a stiff glory, and it could only be kept in order at all by plaiting it all over.

The vein of difference ran right through the two characters, and was perceptible in all they did, and all they did not do. Colonel St. John could not delight Judith more than by presenting her with any sort of glittering trumpery with which she could adorn her little person ; beads, above all things, made her supremely happy ; indeed, she never could act, unless she had contrived for herself something in the way of a costume which she thought appropriate to the part that she was going to play. In general,

too, she put her things on in a fantastic way, always sticking somewhere or other a bit of colour that made her look picturesque.

Angel, on the contrary, never wore anything but black, and that of the simplest fashion, and the only presents the colonel could ever induce her to accept were flowers, especially violets, of which she was passionately fond, and of which the little room now was always full. She used every now and then to make feeble attempts to tear off the rags with which Judith would bedizen herself; but she was no match, morally or physically, for that exceedingly rebellious little personage; and small was the assistance she received in the matter from Jacky, who herself nourished at heart a secret taste for the tawdry, which peeped out wherever there was the smallest loophole. Besides, with Jacky the child always had her way. She was so quick, so eager to learn, so apt at seizing all that was taught her—Jacky sym-

phathized with her as an artist, and doted on her as a daughter. In virtue of her nation, Jacky was an excellent cook, and into the mysteries of this science too did she initiate the little Judith, who was never so happy as when she was allowed to cook something for the supper of her beloved colonel. She would then appear in a long white pinafore, which covered her from head to foot, with a white handkerchief pinned round her head in imitation of a cook's cap, and would come in thus attired, and serve with the utmost gravity the dishes which she had dressed.

But, alas! to all pleasantness there comes an end, and those happy days of innocent joys and simple affections were fast drawing to their close.

One morning, as Colonel St. John was going out, the *concierge* presented him with a note from Angel Fane; it contained these words:—

DEAR COLONEL,

Monsieur Guillaume has arrived, and Jacky insists upon my writing to beg you not to come to us this evening. She says that you and Monsieur Guillaume would not suit each other, and that it would never do ; but I cannot help thinking that he would be pleased to make your acquaintance, and I am sure you would like one who has proved himself so true a friend, such a noble benefactor to the poor children you are good enough to care about. What would have become of us, where should we be now, but for him? However, as Jacky says so, I suppose you had better not come till you hear from us again. Good-bye, dear colonel ; we shall be so dull without you. Jacky is always so cross when Monsieur Guillaume is here—nothing goes right ; and Judy won't open her lips to him. The blot is a kiss from Judy.

Your ever affectionate

ANGELA FANE.

Colonel St. John went to a play that evening, but found the return to his old habits, after so long an interval, unspeakably irksome and unpleasurable.

Early the next morning he sent a heap of fresh violets upstairs, and received in reply the following welcome words :—

A thousand thanks, dear Colonel. Monsieur Guillaume goes to-night ; pray come.

Your grateful

ANGELA FANE.

At eight o'clock in the evening he stood once more before the little door of his earthly paradise. He heard a man's voice within, and Jacky, who let him in, informed him that Monsieur Guillaume was there—come to take leave. On entering the room, Colonel St. John was painfully struck by Angel's appearance. She was lying on the sofa ; her eyes gleamed with an

unnatural and feverish brightness, and there were two spots of vivid hectic colour on her generally pale cheeks. Her manner was nervous and restless, and she seemed altogether ill at ease. She seized the colonel's hand with trembling fingers, and raising herself with an effort, called to Monsieur Guillaume, who was standing in the window with his back to the room, conversing in a low voice with Jacky.

“Monsieur Guillaume! I want to introduce my English friend, Colonel St. John, to you.”

He turned, and Colonel St. John beheld the orphans' friend, and about as repulsive a specimen of a human creature as it had ever been his fortune to encounter;—narrow-chested; high shoulders, upon which descended a shock of dim unwholesome-looking hair; a head as flat as an animal's; hard little green eyes; no nose whatever to speak of; an interminable space between the nose and mouth; the mouth a long hard line, with scarcely any lips at all.

Here was the Monsieur Guillaume that Angel Fane loved !—an essentially mean, cruel, shabby creature, in spite of his clothes, every article of which shone with a bran new lustre. He wore gold rings in his ears, and when in a husky, discordant voice he had performed his civilities to the colonel, and offered him an extremely dirty hand, the impression was complete.

The colonel attempted to be amiable, and spoke of the pleasure he had received from his admittance to the house, and the delight he took in Angel's singing.

"She has no strength—no lungs," said Monsieur Guillaume. "She must go to Italy, and exert herself, and get strength: she has no energy."

When he went, Jacky bade him farewell with a face of thunder. Judith was repeatedly called for, by her sister, but she had not appeared at all during the visit, and was not

forthcoming at the departure, when required. The only person who seemed sorry to lose him was Angel. She got up to bid him good-bye, she gave him his hat, she gave him his stick, she gave him a bunch of those violets which the colonel had sent her.

"You seem to be spending a fortune in flowers," said Monsieur Guillaume, passing his dingy hand roughly over the faces of the violets on the table, and knocking some of them out of the vase in which they stood.

"No, indeed," answered Angel, eagerly and deprecatingly; "it is Colonel St. John's kindness that procures us this pleasure."

"Ah—very good—very good," said Monsieur Guillaume with his hoarse toneless voice; "a very pretty present to make a woman—and it don't cost much. I always give flowers when I can get women to take 'em; they don't cost much. You can get nosegays for half the price the second day, and they're every bit as

good. It's a pretty present, and it don't cost much."

As soon as the door was shut, and that Jacky, who had gone to let him out, re-appeared in the room, a tremulous motion began to agitate the table-cover, and Judith slowly emerged from beneath it.

"What, have you been there all the time, little one?" said the colonel, laughing.

"Yes," answered the child; "I didn't choose to be kissed by that dirty nasty man."

"Oh, for shame, Judith!" said Angel, flushing crimson again with annoyance. "How can you speak so of Monsieur Guillaume?"

"He *is* dirty—he *is* nasty—he smells bad—and I hate him," returned little Judy sturdily, nothing daunted by the unwonted expression of Angel's displeasure.

"Cette enfant le devine, monsieur," said Jacky in a proud whisper to the colonel,—
"elle le devine! Yesterday, when he will em-

brace her, she crashed him to the visage. Ah, monsieur! quelle ange que cette enfant!" And she took a pinch of snuff, and complacently contemplated the amiable infant, who was now fondly nestling in the colonel's breast, with her cheek tenderly pressed against his.

"Oh, Jacky, I can't bear it!" again broke out poor Angel; "indeed I can't bear to hear you speak so. Oh, colonel, Judith has been so naughty, and Jacky has been just as bad, encouraging her the whole time! No one has been decently civil to him, and we owe him everything. Why, every bit of bread we have eaten for the last year and a half has been his; and I think it quite wicked to behave so to him: I think it quite wicked of Judy to like people only for their looks, as she does, —to hate poor Monsieur Guillaume because he happens to be plain, and to like you just because you are not." Here Angel burst into a passion of tears, and could with great

difficulty be quieted and made to lie down again.

The child's instinct was a true one, and no one who had ever looked at the two men, could have doubted it for a moment. Colonel St. John was thin, tall, and straight, and held himself particularly erect. His face expressed great determination, but there was nothing whatever dogged about it. Something a little sad there was in the face, perhaps something a little haughty : but the mouth, that smiled seldom, was inexpressibly sweet when it did smile ; and the eyes, though dark and piercing, were kindly, and looked honestly and fearlessly into those of the people he spoke to. At a glance you could see that he would be a fast friend ; and if an enemy, though a bitter, yet a loyal one.

He learned from the indignant Jacky that the previous day, as soon as Monsieur Guillaume had set foot in the house, he had made Angel sing to him for nearly two hours ; that then she

had had a very tiring lesson with her master ; —Monsieur Guillaume in attendance, and reproaching the professor with giving short allowance of time ; and that in the evening, again, he had brought with him three or four theatrical agents to hear her ; that she had been frightened, and had broken down from nervousness and over-fatigue, and that he had been much displeased, and told her that she wanted zeal, and did not work half hard enough.

“He does not know how weak I feel sometimes !” said poor Angel, wearily ; “but he says we are all to go to Italy in the autumn, and spend the winter there : isn’t it so kind and good of him ? Last winter I had nothing but colds, and coughs, and inflammations, and couldn’t sing at all ; and then I got my rheumatic fever, and oh ! there was such a doctor’s bill ! I think perhaps it is because I keep growing so, that I can’t get my strength up. Oh, dear colonel, I do feel so very, very tired sometimes, and as if

I did long so to sit on mother's lap again! It seems as though no place could rest my bones but that. Isn't it ridiculous of a great maypole like me, to want my mammy, just for all the world like a little baby?"

She tried to laugh, but two great tears rolled from her closed eyes all down her face, and trickled along by the side of her quivering mouth.

The poor child was fairly worn out—the benefactor's visit did not seem to have diffused much happiness over the little circle.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE summer went—the autumn set in. Towards the close of November, Monsieur Guillaume wrote to desire the children to pack up and be ready.

They were to go to Naples, where Angel was to become a pupil of the Conservatoire, then under the direction of the great Crescentini. Colonel St. John was to hear from them immediately upon their arrival. He had never seen Italy, and had determined to make his desire to visit that country a pretext for following, with as little delay as possible, those who now made up to him the sum and substance of what is understood by the words—family, home, happiness.

He waited more than a month for this promised letter ; and then, sick of the sickness of hope long deferred, sailed straight for Naples. At the Conservatoire, at the post-office, at the Polizia, he made inquiries, but could learn nothing. After a couple of months spent in fruitless anxiety and vain suspense, he started for Rome. Here too, he was equally unsuccessful. From Rome he proceeded to Florence ; but nowhere could he obtain news of the travellers. What was his amazement one day at Florence on finding the following passage in a *Galignani* two or three weeks old : it was in a paragraph which gave an account of an Easter piece that had been recently produced at the Adelphi, and ran thus :—

“ Nothing can exceed the magnificence of the decorations, and the splendour of the transformations. The descent of the Spirit of Truth, who unmasks the wicked Prince, and terminates the piece by giving the lovers to each other, was

truly magical in its effect. The part was performed by Miss Angela Fane, her first appearance on any stage. The fair *débutante* was evidently labouring under severe indisposition, and the music allotted to her was obliged to be omitted. Her extreme youth, and surpassing loveliness, and the taste and elegance of her costume excited universal enthusiasm, and at the end of the piece, the beautiful Angel Fane was rapturously called for. The few words she had to say were unfortunately quite inaudible, but this was doubtless occasioned by the timidity attendant upon a first appearance, as well as by the cold and cough from which she was evidently suffering severely. Her reception was very flattering, and we venture to predict to the young lady, when she shall have recovered her self-possession and the full command of her powers, a successful and brilliant career."

It was the end of April before Colonel St. John arrived in England. He hurried to the

Adelphi theatre, and there found that poor Angel's triumph had been but short-lived: she had acted but that one night, and had been ill ever since.

Having with some difficulty procured her address, he proceeded immediately in search of her. The house was a dismal abode in one of the dark narrow streets running down from the Strand to the river. He was admitted by a dirty little maid-of-all-work with a wall-eye, who told him what door to knock at on the second floor.

He knocked at the door: it was opened by a squalid child, with thin wan cheeks; but there was no mistaking those unrivalled masses of auburn hair and the lustrous eyes beneath them—once more he held in his arms the Judith of his heart. Uttering a sharp inarticulate cry of joy, she covered him with kisses, and dragged him into the room. In one corner of the poverty-stricken chamber stood a dingy bed: in it, lay

the wreck of all that he loved best in the world. Too weak to utter, she looked at him with grievous wistful eyes, and put out two tremulous, hot, skinny hands to greet him. Colonel St. John could not take them: he tried to speak, but the words choked in his throat, and covering his face with his hands, he burst into an agony of tears.

The sad history was soon told; he heard it from the faithful Jacky, who, reviled and ill-used by Monsieur Guillaume, had never abandoned her poor children. They had never been to Naples, but had remained at Milan, where Angel had studied at the Conservatoire under the tuition of Vaccai. She had written several times to Colonel St. John, at Paris, and they could only account for his never having received the letters by the supposition that Monsieur Guillaume (who nourished a secret apprehension that the colonel might end by marrying Angel) had destroyed, instead of posting them. He

had then brought them all to England, and endeavoured to get an engagement for her at the King's theatre: but her voice was found to be perfectly inadequate to the space that she was called upon to fill, and he then closed with a proposal from the manager of the Adelphi theatre, where he hoped that her physical attractions might make up for her want of vocal power; and it was settled that she should *débuter* in the Easter piece of which Colonel St. John had seen the notice in the *Galignani's Messenger*. She had been taken seriously ill, however, about a fortnight before the piece came out. She was positively driven out of her bed by Monsieur Guillaume to make her first appearance in public; and the attack, increased by the fatal exposure to cold, had turned to violent inflammation of the lungs. For weeks she had hovered between life and death; she was now a thought better, but had lost every atom of her voice, and the doctor had said that,

even if she recovered, she would never be able to sing again.

Monsieur Guillaume was quite beside himself with rage at this unlooked-for termination of what he had expected was to be a lucrative speculation. He had lately become the manager of one of the public gardens, which were just then¹ beginning to come into vogue; and he vowed, that as soon as Angel could sit up, she should go and keep one of the champagne booths with which the place of entertainment abounded. "Je lui ai bien dit que cela tuerait mon enfant, monsieur," said poor Jacky, with her apron to her eyes; "mais il a répondu, qu'elle serve d'enseigne, puisqu'elle ne peut pas servir à autre chose!"

Colonel St. John saw Monsieur Guillaume but once again; this was when, for the sum of three thousand pounds down, he signed an agreement to forego all further claim upon the unfortunate child whom he had murdered.

As soon as Angel could be moved they all started for Italy, travelling by slow short stages, so as to fatigue her as little as possible. She was very entirely happy once again during the last few weeks of her life ; but the happiness had come too late.

She died about ten days after they reached Rome, in Colonel St. John's arms, and it was only by the look of peace that suddenly came upon her poor worn face that they knew that all was over.

She is buried in the protestant cemetery at Rome. "Angela Fane, aged eighteen years," is all that tells of her who lies there. The grave is a very retired spot, where few people ever find it ; but the evening sun shines upon it, the birds sing there in the early spring, and it is covered with a profusion of violets.

Sleep, Angel Fane ! the flowers you loved are growing round and over you ; sweet airs of spring kiss the soft turf that covers you ;

hard words and cruel looks no more shall grieve you : now, only loving eyes of pitying spirits greet you. Peace to the struggling breath, the panting heart, the fevered brain ! Out of our toil, and noise, and glare, sleep in the eternal shadow of your mother's arms !

Sleep, sweet Angel Fane ! your tired limbs lie in the quiet earth—your weary spirit is at rest with God.

When Colonel St. John returned to England, Jacky and the little Judith accompanied him. The child had become more than ever dear to him : he adopted her, and gave her his name, to the extreme disgust of Mrs. Willoughby St. John, who never mentioned him except as a lunatic who ought to be in Bedlam, or a reprobate who ought to be in a penitentiary. His health, which had suffered considerably from his long residence in India, had not been improved by all he had gone through since his

return to Europe; his doctor advised country air and field sports, and so he took a small house in the village of R——, in Northamptonshire, and hunted. Judith was sent to a sort of little genteel day-school, kept by the postmaster's sister; but she taught all the children to act, made them study their parts instead of learning their lessons, and vigorously and steadfastly rejected the crumbs of intellectual nourishment with which Miss Minchin vainly endeavoured to provide her.

One day, when the insurrection was at its height, Colonel St. John was called in to quell it. He found Judith with a gold paper crown upon her head, frantically brandishing a hearth-broom, and exclaiming, "I won't be clean—I won't be tidy: I'll be grand and dirty and *beautiful*, and I'll never do another sum as long as I live!" Miss Minchin said her girls were getting quite bewildered by the play-acting and fairy trash with which she had contrived to

infect them all—the pupils older than herself, as well as those younger. Miss Minchin meekly wiped her gentle long nose, and tearfully observed that, in the long run, she felt it tell upon the sums. And so the public corrupter of school morals was withdrawn from the establishment, and remained at home, running wild about the village ; very idle, very happy, and very generally beloved. She was helpful to the old and poor ; the champion of all the oppressed, human or animal ; the sworn friend of all the black sheep in the place, and the constant companion and firm ally of old Teddy the rat-catcher, who worshipped the ground she trod upon, taught her to fish and to birds'-nest, and who made her a present of a most hideous brindled mongrel of the terrier breed, which he had himself trained to rat-hunting, which Judith christened Boguey, and which was the delight of her existence.

But it seemed as if the poor child was doomed

to be torn roughly from every place in which she began to strike out a root. After they had been settled about a couple of years at R——, Colonel St. John fell from his horse out hunting. He was brought home by a Mr. Leslie, a friend of his brother Willoughby St. John's who was staying in the neighbourhood at the time, and only survived the injuries he had received, long enough to tell Richard Leslie to take the child and her attendant to his brother Willoughby.

“I have left him all—give him my love—I had meant to provide for the child, but this death has been so sudden—he has everything—tell him to provide for the child.” These were the last words of the only friend poor little Judith possessed in this great wide world.

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN Richard Leslie communicated the sad event, and his brother's last words and wishes, to Mr. St. John, great was the domestic dissension that ensued. Willoughby St. John's affections had got crusted over by money-making, and worldly living, and above all by the deteriorating influences of his married life : but he had once been young, and with the tidings of his brother's death came back tender remembrances of their boyhood, when they had been dear companions, and a remorseful recollection of the apathy and neglect which had coloured his relations with him ever since his return from India. Ah! that bitter word, Too late!—most of us know it.

"A parcel of horrid strollers!—it is out of the question that they should come to Brankleigh ; I never heard of such a thing," said Mrs. St. John.

"Poor Mackworth ! *he* loved them !" replied her husband in a hoarse voice.

"It was only a part of the eccentricity which marked every action of his existence. Who, but he, would ever have thought of going and living in that disreputable sort of way out of his own country, and travelling about with a pack of low vagabonds ?"

"The less said about that, I think, the better," answered Mr. St. John, with an unwonted degree of bitterness. "If he had met with more brotherly love from me, and something more of a sister's welcome from you, he wouldn't have been driven to seek affection in other places."

"Affection indeed !" retorted Mrs. St. John : "the young lady seems to have known very well what she was about, and we may think ourselves

uncommonly lucky that she died before he could disgrace the family still more by marrying her."

"I shall write, and desire them to come without delay," observed Willoughby St. John.

"You had much better do no such thing," said she. "They had much better not come at all, since it is quite out of the question that they should remain here."

"Why, Augusta," answered her husband, "I should have thought that the child might have proved an object of interest both to you and me, as we have none of our own. I shall write and tell them to set off immediately, and I make it my particular request, that when the poor things come, you will receive them in a proper manner."

Mrs. St. John was a tallish woman, with a certain share of insignificant good looks. She had dark, staring, utterly meaningless, glassy eyes, and tolerably regular features ; but it was the hardest face in the world, and the voice

matched it. When she was sixteen, it was the voice of an old worldling of sixty, and it had not improved with years. She wanted charm of every kind, and distinction completely. Her complexion was the least good thing about her ; but as at night she looked showy, and was always dressed in the extreme of the newest fashion vulgar people generally thought her both handsome and elegant. She was fond of fashionable entertainments, and liked to go to anything that royalty sanctioned, or of which Lady A—— was one of the lady patronesses. She regularly visited all the exhibitions, except those of the old masters ; and had a box at the Opera, for she thought she liked music. Every season, too, she had a concert at her own house in Portman Square. Costa conducted it, and she always had the singers who were most run after : but, as her manner was alike devoid of grace and kindliness, they hated going there, and generally sang indifferently. She had an idea

that she showed both fashion and morality by keeping what she called "people of that sort" at a distance. She had a laughably exaggerated idea of her own importance, and in her intercourse with all her fellow-creatures (her friends included) was always anxious—to use a favourite expression of her own—that they should "keep their proper place."

This was the woman to whose tender mercies poor Jacky and her little charge were to be made over. Anything that in dress or manner happened to be at all different from what she was in the habit of seeing, appeared to her, therefore, necessarily ridiculous, or morally reprehensible; and the old woman and the little girl were peculiar enough in all their ways, Heaven knows, to offend the conventionalities of which she was the high priestess upon earth. She had, besides, an underbred way of never being at her ease with persons whom she thought either superior or inferior to herself in social

position; and it was a sort of disagreeable sensation, that generally engendered a feeling of dislike in her.

Her sister-in-law, Miss Louisa St. John, had been asked down to Brankleigh to help her through her painful task on the day on which the travellers were expected; and both the ladies wept, and both would gladly have put on sackcloth, and strewn ashes on their heads, upon the melancholy occasion—so greatly did they think the house disgraced and their worldly standing endangered by the presence of this helpless old woman and little child. Louisa St. John hinted that her brother's mind must be affected, she had never known him do an unselfish thing before.

The carriage drove up to the door, and little Judith leaped out.

“Good heavens!” said Mrs. St. John, who was at the window, “look at those hideous carrots!”

Her own hair was black, and she believed in no other colour.

"Dearest Gussa," said Miss Louisa, "don't have her in here just yet ; do let Coningsby set them a little to rights first. Such a nest of a head!—who knows?—foreign ways, you know, dear—better let Coningsby, dear,"—and they were shown to their room at the top of the house, and Coningsby despatched with a comb and brush to their assistance : but Jacky never permitted any one but herself to meddle with her golden treasure ; and Mrs. Coningsby, who had been deeply injured by being sent upon such an errand, had to retire still more so, at having her condescending advances rejected.

Bitter was the first week of their stay at Brankleigh to Mrs. St. John ; and superhuman her endeavours to dislodge them. She manœuvred—she stormed—she argued,—but at last, Mr. St. John fairly lost his temper, and told her he would be master in his own house ;

and so she had to give in, at all events for the present.

The worst of it was, that Willoughby St. John took kindly to the child ; secretly even he did not dislike old Jacky (Miss Almond, as the servants used to call her). Brankleigh was such a dull place. The old woman's queer ways and extraordinary lingo made him laugh, and in his heart of hearts he felt almost grateful to her for his entertainment.

The first thing objected to in little Judith was her hair. It was Jacky's pride and glory, and as it was kept and dressed to perfection by her the ladies could only find fault with the quantity of it—which made her head look so large and coarse, they said—and its colour. "Why not cut it all off," cheerfully suggested Louisa St. John one morning at breakfast, "and keep her head shaved for two or three years? When it grew again it would most likely be darker ; you could stuff a small sofa with the hair—I'm sure *there's* enough of it!"

The next thing that was a source of amazement and disapprobation was her name ; who ever heard of such a name ? Miss Louisa said it put her in mind of Punch and Judy ; and Mr. St. John, who had no great flow of inventive wit, used regularly to ask Judith twenty times a day, whenever he saw her, “ where Holofernes was.” Rather a mild joke ; but one that shocked his wife, who was particular about religious matters. So having discovered that the little girl had also been christened Elena, they agreed to drop Judith for ever, and sinking Elena into Helen, to call her thenceforth by that name.

The great object of Mrs. St. John’s life was now to eject Jacky. The woman had been her aversion from the day of her arrival, and every day grew more and more antipathetic to her. She walked in the flower-garden with the child without permission ; she was even once caught picking a carnation for her ; and one day Mrs. St. John came upon her unawares, as she was

sitting upon a particular bench which commanded rather a pretty view of the stream that ran through the grounds, and which Mrs. St. John, no one knew why, considered sacred to herself.

But the chief grievance of all was that, nothing discouraged by Mrs. St. John's frigid discourtesy, with foreign politeness the poor old thing would hurry to her from a mile off, whenever she caught a glimpse of her, and overwhelm her with remarks about the weather, and inquiries after her health, to which, more or less graciously, Mrs. St. John was forced to give a reply ; and more than all, deep in her heart rankled the feeling that her presence in the house was a living testimony of the only battle with Mr. St. John in which she had not come off victorious : this was the bitterest morsel of all, and she could not digest it. Poor Jacky ! she had a hard time of it : the servants laughed at her, the magnificent footmen insulted her ; they pretended not to understand what she meant when

she asked for anything. She bore it all with unswerving civility and an angelic patience, so anxious was she to propitiate these only friends of the child she doted upon ; but there came a day, a fatal day, when excess of zeal lost all.

About six months after their arrival at Brankleigh, a great dinner was given to the neighbours in honour of Willoughby St. John's birthday. The Rector of Willesden and his wife ; the Vicar of Worsley ; the Rev. Augustus Mirch, with the Honourable William Thoresby, an unpleasant lad of seventeen, with a pimply chin, who was reading with him ; Sir William and Lady Redman ; Sir John Hammesley, and the Lady Adela Brandon—a most odious old maid, who was toadied in the neighbourhood in virtue of her being a duke's daughter, who would go anywhere to save the expense of her dinner at home, and who delighted in making the people who received her as uncomfortable as she

possibly could. It was quite a tip-top party ; the guests were numerous, the food interminable, and the function lasted more than two hours.

At last, grace was said, dessert was placed upon the table, and there was heavenly relief from the creaking of the footmen's shoes ; but the lull was only momentary—an odd jingling sound as of bells was heard, the door opened, and the little Helen suddenly appeared. She wore a short white petticoat, and her legs and feet were bound round with sandals of red worsted braid ; high above her head she held a tambourine, brimming over with fruit and flowers. Softly-glowing geraniums leaned their rosy petals against the deep bloom of purple grapes ; large moon-faced roses were there, and flaming salvias mixed with the dusky barberry and dark branches of the copper beech ; long waving garlands of blood-red Virginian creeper hung down, framing her grave young visage,

and Southern eyes ; and crowned with all these fires of the falling season, and with the royal masses of her auburn hair, which was unbound and nearly covered her from head to foot, she stood for a few seconds before the astonished assembly, a gorgeous vision of incarnate Autumn : then, slowly advancing, with a stately obeisance she laid her fragrant treasures at Willoughby St. John's feet. Having presented her offering, the little creature began bounding over the large empty space at the bottom of the room. Sometimes she seemed to float, sometimes she seemed to fly, sometimes she spun round and round upon the same spot, while her hair, driven from her by the velocity of her motions, stood out round her like a halo of red light. Her vigour and animation, her strength and lightness were beautiful to behold. But, alas ! no one there thought them so ; the consternation was universal and complete. The Rector crimsoned ; the Vicar looked

another way ; the Reverend Mirch got up and sat down again, veiling chaste eyes with a fat hand ; the Honourable William lay back in his chair, and laughed till he cried—he applauded too, he was so pleased at the discomfiture of the clergy in general, and of his own clergy in particular. Lady Redman, after looking steadily at the performance for a few seconds, put down her glass, and said nervously, “Dear me ! how very peculiar !” The only person who preserved her presence of mind was Lady Adela, who put up hers, and leaning forward from her place of honour at Willoughby St. John’s right hand, towards the other end of the table, where Mrs. St. John sat, ready to faint with mortification, observed, with slow grinding nasal distinctness that could have been heard miles off, “Well, you *have* given us an entertainment *this* time !” But the horror had not reached its height : the child, feeling, with the unerring instinct of an artist, that she was

not successful, paused, and hesitated in her dance, and, blushing to the roots of her hair, cast a look of anguish towards the door: it burst open, and in rushed Jacky to the rescue attired in that Spanish costume which we have had occasion to mention, and from which she had never had the courage to part. Throwing herself on one knee in the middle of the room, she bent her body back until her head nearly touched the ground behind her, deliriously cracking her castanets, and waving her miserable old arms, while she screamed to the frightened child to encourage her. “Allons! du courage, ma fille! enfonçons la cabale! c’est ça—allez! ecrasons! enlevons la salle!”—which indeed she did effectually, for Mrs. St. John suddenly rose, and for the first and last time in her existence wholly oblivious of etiquette, swept out of the room with her handkerchief to her eyes, followed by all the ladies of the party, Lady Adela included, who said she was

totally indifferent to matters of precedence, but who never forgot it, for all that.

Willoughby St. John did not pass a good night—his wife had real hysterics,—and the next day Jacky disappeared. She took no leave of the little one—she never could have gone if she had trusted herself to do that: she knew that upon these people hung the fate of her beloved one, and without a word, without a murmur, she made up her little bundle, great drops of pain falling slowly down the while, and then, having sent Helen out to run with her dog, she walked down to the village, and took the coach for town. The child was well-nigh frantic with despair when she learned that Jacky was gone, not to return. Willoughby St. John, who was good-natured at heart, was grieved to see her suffer so; but the only person who seemed at all able to comfort her was Richard Leslie, who was staying in the house at the time, and who became quite fond of the poor little

forlorn girl, to whom everything in this new life was so oppressive and painful, and who pined and faded away for the want of the love and companionship of her old faithful friend.

But Richard Leslie did not live at Brankleigh, and he went abroad, and the child grew more wild and sad and sickly than ever ; and then Lousia St. John, who although a fool was a clever one, suggested school. This stone killed a good many birds—it gave Mrs. St. John the air of occupying herself about the child's welfare, while it removed her out of her way ; and it gave Willoughby St. John the comfortable sensation of doing his duty by his brother at the same time that he propitiated his wife, while the child's health, physical and moral, would no doubt derive incalculable benefit from the change in her existence ; and so she went successively to Miss Varney's, Miss Pritchett's, Mrs. Bridgeford's and Miss Whitehead's different establishments ; and now, as she told

Richard Leslie in our first chapter, was at home once more, studying the mysteries of hair-dressing under Coningsby, that she might qualify herself at least for a lady's-maid's station in life.

CHAPTER X.

THE contents of the letter-bag which leaves Brankleigh every evening at six o'clock :—

Mrs. St. John to Miss Louisa St. John.

DEAREST LOUISA,

I hope you have not forgotten your promise to pay us a little visit in September. We have been at home ten days now, and our little party is already beginning to form itself for the shooting season. The Wyndhams and Captain Montagu are here—they arrived last week ; and on Saturday, when we came home from our drive, who should we find upon the lawn but Richard Leslie ! but so altered, I think I should hardly have recognized him—

grown so brown and muscular, so different from the interesting refined-looking youth he was when he left England: I am sure he must have been living in inferior society, or his expression could never have changed as it has. His manner too has become abrupt almost to rudeness. He sits silent for hours without any attempt to make himself agreeable, and when he does speak, I regret to say that it is too often with a sneer at things that everybody respects and admires. However, perhaps he is hardly seen to advantage by the side of Captain Montagu, who certainly possesses fascination of manner that belongs to very few people. So enthusiastic, so gentlemanly, and then so much mind! You will have to take care of your heart, I warn you, dear Louisa. Serafina Wyndham, who came here complaining extremely of her health, has wakened up immensely since Captain Montagu's arrival—more than I think I should quite like in Mr. Wynd-

ham's place ; but I always wish to take the tolerant view if possible—foreigners cannot be expected to have the principles of English people, and I strive never to forget that she is German.

Richard tells me that his cousin, Miss Sandford, is passing within a few miles of Brankleigh on her way to Calverley next Thursday, so I could not well do less than invite her to give us a day or two. You might perhaps arrange to come down together. I cannot say that I look forward with much pleasure to her visit ; there is no great congeniality of disposition between us, and she always is so uncivil in her manner to Serafina, that I should have preferred having her at another time if it had been possible. Adieu, dearest Louisa, or rather as Captain Montagu always says so prettily, “ Auf Widersehn ! ”

Ever your affectionate sister,

AUGUSTA ST. JOHN.

Mrs. Wyndham to Mademoiselle Oppenheim.

BEST ONE,

This is to announce the arrival of a basket of fruit and vegetables that I have begged from the garden here for you, and which you will receive to-morrow. You will find the flavour very different from what is to be got in London.

What will my Amalia say, when she hears that I want another box sent down immediately? I want my blue glacé, my pink crape, and the white ribbon upper skirt with the tulle bouffantes. Wyndham has said we would stay for ten days; but Bryanstone Square at this season, and with him on my hands, would try me too severely in my shattered state of nerves, and I mean to be here three weeks at least. Mr. St. John is easily managed, and can be made obstinate too, if he takes it into his head to have his own way; not, indeed, that I anticipate opposition in any

other quarter. Augusta is quite engrossed with her friend Captain Montagu, and at present in tolerably good temper with herself and her guests. A few days ago, there might have been a little difficulty, as Captain Montagu is very musical; and as her voice is deficient both in quality and quantity, and very imperfect in intonation, he naturally preferred singing with me; but even that amount of slight sympathetic intimacy which music always engenders, was quite sufficient to impart a very perceptible shade of acid to her customary frigid civilities. Ah, dearest, it is not life among these icy English hearts! I am sick of their pretensions and their pride! The moral superiority with which they are so puffed up, is nothing but a sort of court suit to be put off and on at will: they make use of virtue to censure and oppress every other nationality, and I do not find that in reality they practise it a bit more than their neighbours. Mr. Richard Leslie is here, just

returned from Italy. The sentimental dreaming boy has ripened into the thoughtful passionate man. He has eyes that open new worlds to one: elementish eyes—they have the power of fire, the depth of water, some earth too—ah, if he loved, they might be all heaven! He is far above them all here, but they do not understand him. Does my Amalia tremble for her Serafina's peace? No, best one! for your Serafina is that book for ever closed. Ich habe gelebt und geliebt. Besides, I must keep Wyndham in good humour or there will be no Paris this winter. When next I write, I will enclose you a receipt for pine-apple cream, which is delicious here. Put the servants on board wages, dearest, and dine yourself at old Mrs. Wyndham's as often as you can. You can make yourself useful at backgammon and cribbage; besides, who would not be glad of my Amalia's society? When you send the gowns, you might enclose a box of chocolate bonbons

filled with maraschino cream ; they are to be got at Verey's in Regent Street. A thousand heartfelt greetings from your fondly attached.

SERAFINA WYNDHAM.

Mr. Leslie to Miss Sandford.

DEAR HOPE,

I enclose a note from my hostess, asking you to take Brankleigh in your way to Calverly. I hope you will come : I wish to talk to you about that child I am so interested in, and whom I would give worlds to help, if I only knew how. Besides, we want something of your stubborn element here. We live from morning to night in a sort of vapour bath of poetry, music, æsthetics, and metaphysics, and all of the very flimsiest description. Our feet are never on the ground for one single instant, and I feel thirsty for something real. Your hearty shake of the hand, your dear gruff voice, and the clear blue truth that looks out so honestly and kindly

from your eyes. It can make no difference to you to give me these few days ; besides, I heard from Calverly this morning, and you are not at all wanted there yet : my mother is remarkably well, and has got the two eldest Johnstone girls with her.

The Wyndhams are here. I remember I used to think her a sort of mysterious white angel before I went abroad, and Wyndham a hideous despot. Were her teeth always black ?

Yours ever,

RICHARD LESLIE.

The ladies obeyed their respective injunctions, and on the appointed Thursday made common cause to Brankleigh. The house stood high, and the carriage had to wind slowly up a steepish hill.

"I'll get out, if you please," said Louisa St. John, who was always frightened to death in a

carriage, and invariably requested to be put down the moment she was off the plain.

"I'll come with you," said Miss Sandford, jumping out after her. "It will be much pleasanter walking across the park. Do you know if there are many people at Brankleigh just now?"

"Only Richard Leslie and the Wyndhams, and dearest Gussa's new friend, Captain Montagu, I believe," returned her companion. "Richard Leslie seems quite thrown into the background by the military phoenix."

"What has become of the little girl who was so strangely thrown upon their hands a few years ago?"

"Look to the right there," answered Miss St. John, "and if I am not very much mistaken, I think you will see the person you are inquiring about."

Hope Sandford followed the direction of Miss St. John's parasol, and saw Helen stooping down over a low stone wall at a little distance, appar-

ently too absorbed to heed them. Her dog was barking furiously at some object which she was offering to his observation.

"What has she got there, I wonder?" said Miss St. John: "something she oughtn't to have, I make no doubt."

"Oh, do let us go and speak to her," said Miss Sandford. "I have heard so much about her from Richard Leslie, and have always had such a curiosity to see her."

"Fruit, most likely," said Miss Louisa, following up the thread of her reflections. "That child does exactly what she likes with all the servants. "How d'ye do, Helen?" added she, as they drew near.

The little girl hastily put the object, whatever it might be, that had been engrossing her attention into her hat, which, as usual, was in her hand, and not upon her head.

"What have you found precious enough to be concealed so carefully in your hat?"

"Oh, nothing that you would care to see, Miss St. John," answered the child.

"Something or other nice that you've been wheedling out of the gardener, or purloining out of the hot-houses, eh? Not likely to have anything like a scruple to her back, you know," said Miss St. John, hardly lowering her voice while she made the last not very flattering observation. "Come, Helen," added she, "show us the booty, and if we do consider it our duty to acquaint dear Mrs. St. John with the fact, at all events we won't compel you to give up the spoil." She made a movement to seize the hat; whereupon Helen, who had gradually been growing very red under the fire of Miss St. John's various remarks, suddenly drawing her hand from beneath the hat, thrust the object of discussion almost into her face.

"Pray take it, ma'am, if you wish to have it," said she.

"Good gracious! Take it away—nasty hideous

beast! What is it? For Heaven's sake take it away!" screamed the alarmed Louisa, backing in extreme discomfiture, while Helen in fits of laughter replaced the bone of contention in the crown of her hat.

"What is it?" said Miss Sandford gently, putting her hand on the child's shoulder.

"Only a poor little baby bat, ma'am," answered she. "I found it here, under the wall: I suppose it has tumbled out of its nest."

She took the strange soft black creature out, and showed it to Miss Sandford.

"What a queer beast it is!" she said. "I don't wonder at its frightening Miss St. John. How uncanny it does look, to be sure!"

"But isn't it lovely?" said Helen, stroking its back. "Look what darling little ears it has, and what a funny little face!"

"It's like a little devil," said Miss Sandford.

"Yes—'birds of a feather,' you know,—that's why she likes it, depend upon it," said Miss

Louisa, who was listening to the conversation from a discreet distance.

"I suppose," said Hope Sandford, sitting down on the wall by Helen, "that living in the country as you do, you learn to get over the terror and aversion we cockneys feel at the sight of creatures we are not used to?"

"I don't remember ever being afraid of insects: they are so pretty, and generally so harmless," said Helen.

"Pray, what insects do you particularly admire? Earwigs? or cockchafers?" said Miss Louisa, becoming gradually insolent again as her alarm abated: Helen had put the little beast down again, under the shadow of the wall where she had found him.

"Well, caterpillars are often quite lovely," she said, "and some spiders too; and see how pretty these are!" she continued, diving into her pocket, and bringing up a handful of lively beetles of various colours. This last exhibition

fairly put Miss St. John to flight ; and rather lucky it was, for on arriving at the house they found that the dressing-bell had rung some time, and it was a cardinal sin at Brankleigh to be late for dinner.

CHAPTER XI.

WHEN the newly arrived pair appeared in the drawing-room, Mrs. Wyndham flew to meet Miss St. John, and embraced her tenderly ; she then turned to Miss Sandford, apparently with some intention of greeting her with a similar demonstration of affection : but that lady immediately extended a very stiff arm right in front of her, in a manner so ingenious and uncompromising, as to make any nearer approach both physically and morally impossible. Luckily, the announcement of dinner, and the bustle attendant upon the ceremony of obeying the summons, covered any little awkwardness Mrs. Wyndham might have experienced.

Serafina Wyndham's teeth were black—at

least, two of them were. One was at the side, and didn't so much matter ; but the other was directly in front, and spoiled her good looks considerably. But for this defect, and a coarseness of expression and of texture about her nose, she would certainly have been a very pretty woman. She was a tiny creature with clouds of fair hair, a wonderful white skin, lovely hands and arms, the eyes of an angel and the feet of a baby : but here ended all resemblance with either angels or babies.

Of a forgiving temper however, she appeared to be, if you might judge by the amiable manner in which, when they were all assembled in the drawing-room for the evening, she again addressed Miss Sandford, who appeared to labour under a natural incapacity for accepting any proposition that she suggested, or agreeing with any opinion that she expressed.

“ How kind of her,” said Mrs. Wyndham, “ to come and give up two or three days of dear

Mrs. Leslie's society for yours! I hope you feel as flattered as you ought, Mr. Leslie?"

"Might there not be a want of grace on my part," answered he, laughing, "in assuming that Miss Sandford's presence at Brankleigh is entirely attributable to the force of my attractions, great as we all know them to be?"

"Mrs. Wyndham is perfectly right," said Hope, sturdily. "I am here almost entirely on your account, Richard; but for the fact of your being here at present, I should greatly have preferred coming later: it would have suited me better in every respect."

"I am sure," said Mrs. Wyndham, "you ought to be quite touched, Mr. Leslie; Miss Sandford not only gives you up her pleasure and convenience, but makes you what is the loveliest offering of true friendship—the sacrifice even of her duties. Your dear blind mother, who is always so much in need of her,—you see she even gives her up for you."

"My mother has two young friends staying with her," replied Mr. Leslie, "and is quite able to dispense with Hope's attendance for the present ; and as I look upon it as her vocation in life to be eyes to the blind, when she is not ministering to my poor dear mother's physical infirmity, I get her to look after the moral vision for me a little."

"You must be delighted to come into the country after your London season, Miss Sandford," remarked Mrs. Wyndham, "though one would not think, to see your beautiful colour, that you came from town."

"Yes," said Hope, "the heat and dust have put my face into a very uncomfortable blaze, I know ; but I feel London most when I go there first. It does seem too bad to go into all that smoke and dinge just as the new leaves are beginning to uncurl in the country."

"I hate an English spring, for my part," observed Mr. Leslie. "The sky is always so

high and hard, and the new leaves have such a raw tone. The autumn is the only really beautiful season here, and our sporting propensities always get us into the country time enough for that."

"Partings are more tender than meetings," murmured Serafina, "and the poet feels all the melancholy sweetness contained in nature's *lebwohl*. There is but one word for this pleasurable pain, and that is one of our German words—*wehmuth*. You have, I think, no word, that expresses it in English; but that is, perhaps, because you also have not the feeling.

"I should think very likely not," answered Miss Sandford. "English people are generally glad when they are glad, and sorry when they're sorry, and don't deal in mixed feelings and confused sensations, as I believe Germans do."

There was a momentary pause, during which Mrs. Wyndham fixed her eyes upon Hope with a little air of masked astonishment, and then

observed, "I suppose you speak Italian quite perfectly now, Mr. Leslie? It is delightful to know many languages. Some one said that it was like living so many different lives : not that three or four lives would be a gift for all—for some," she added with a stifled sigh, "one is even too much ; but it is charming always to be able to find an echo in some nationality or other, for one's untranslatable feelings."

"I have no untranslatable feelings," said Miss Sandford, "and therefore find English more than sufficient for my very limited necessities of expression."

"But surely," said Captain Montagu, "we should be lost creatures without some of the words which really by common consent have almost become incorporated into the English language. German abounds in words which we want and do not possess : why, oh why, have we not a 'sehnsucht ?' "

"And what, oh what," cried Richard Leslie,

"should we do to express a paradise of idleness under a fine sky, without 'dolce far niente'?"

"I never was under any but English skies, thank Heaven," said Miss Sandford, "and I can't fancy idleness a paradise in any climate, or under any circumstances whatsoever."

"But 'sehnsucht, sehnsucht,'" rapturously murmured Captain Montagu; then, taking his guitar and leaning languishingly towards Mrs. St. John, he warbled the beginning of "Du, du, liegst wir im Herzen."

"That used to be a duet, usedn't it," asked Mr. Leslie. "Montagu, why don't you make Mrs. Wyndham sing it with you? It wants the second part."

"I'm sure it's much prettier with the man's voice alone," said Mrs. St. John sharply; and turning to Leicester Montagu, she added, "If you are not exhausted by so much feeling, do sing that charming 'Herz, mein Herz.'"

The lovely Leicester, nothing loth, gave her

an ardent look, thrummed a few chords on the guitar, cast his eyes to heaven as if to collect thoughts that would wander, and began.

He had a sort of little throttled tenor voice, and couldn't sing a bit ; but it did uncommonly well for women who did not care about music, and who liked to be sung at : he warbled continual *abschieds* and *lebewohls* ; all his doleful little ditties were full of *herz* and misery ; and as he knew nothing about time, and could not read his notes, "inspired" was the epithet particularly consecrated to him amongst his enthusiastic female friends.

"Divine !" gasped Mrs. St. John when he had done, throwing herself back upon the sofa and closing her eyes ecstatically. "There, Richard !" said she triumphantly, "did you ever hear anything half so lovely ?"

"I think," answered he, "that my stay in Italy has made me come away somewhat from the immense admiration I used to have for the



vague in all things: my taste is more for the positive now."

"What!" she exclaimed, quite in a small fume, "not like German music! I really never did see any one so changed as you are, Richard! Why, you used to dream away whole hours listening to Serafina's lovely *lieder* before you went abroad."

Mr. Leslie looked up with a quiet smile at Mrs. Wyndham, whose white face and neck were for an instant perfectly clouded over with a pink suffusion.

"Not like German music!" Mrs. St. John indignantly continued: "so intellectual! so spiritual! so inspired!"

"Well, that is exactly what in a general way German music does not appear to me to be," said he. "In all German art, you feel more or less obstructed by the movement of the ponderous intellectual faculty; even in the commonest German ballad, and what ought

to be the very simplest expression of sentiment, you feel the interference of their thought between them and their heart: so different in this respect from the songs of the people in Italy—you don't know whether they are love or music, and you don't hear, you only feel them."

"Oh!" whispered Mrs. St. John to Hope Sandford, "isn't he altered?—become so material!"

"I really know so little about music," answered Miss Sandford, "that it is exactly as if you were all talking in a language that I didn't understand."

"Mrs. St. John has changed in her opinions quite as much as I have, in these years," observed Richard Leslie to Miss St. John: "surely when I went away she was frantic about Catone, and only believed in Italian music—but the very most Italian. What style of music does she really prefer?"

"Always the same," answered Louisa St.

John with a kind of meditative tenderness ;
“handsome tenor—handsome tenor : no change
whatever. Dearest Gussa ! her style has always
been the same.”

“Have any of you ever heard little Helen
sing ?” asked Richard Leslie.

“Dear me !” said Miss Louisa, “can she sing
too ? We all knew she could dance, but I had
no notion that her accomplishments extended
to singing !”

Mrs. St. John winced, and got red, as she
always did whenever that unhappy event of
former years was alluded to ; and to her it
hardly ever was, except by Miss Louisa when
she was evilly disposed, and by Lady Adela
Brandon, who at any time would walk across
any length of room for the pleasure of asking
her when she meant to treat them to another
ballet.

“Did you ever hear her sing, Mrs. St. John ?”
said Richard.

"No," was the answer, given in a tone of peculiar dryness.

"Well, but mayn't we hear her?" said Hope Sandford. "It will be a novelty for us all, as Richard appears to have been the only privileged person hitherto. It would be odd if, with that handsome face of hers, there were not something remarkable about it."

"Well, Hope," said Mrs. St. John, "you certainly are the first person who ever thought of calling Helen handsome."

"I beg your pardon," said Richard; "I admire her immensely."

"What, with that short square figure and enormous head? I always thought that one went to Italy to improve one's taste, but I don't think yours can have acquired much refinement, if you can like that great clumsy head and heavy face; but perhaps it is the colour of the hair that you admire?" she added contemptuously.

"Well, that too," said Mr. Leslie, quietly; "it

is so very Titianesque. Besides, I don't agree with you about her face: I don't think it is a heavy face. You always see her when she has got on her good frock and company manners, and when she feels bored and ill at ease; but get her out into the open with her fishing-rod or her dog, and she is as different as night from day. Only wait till she grows to her head—all fine pups have big heads. She'll come out a grand woman one of these days, take my word for it. Do *you* think her so very plain?" he continued, turning to Mrs. Wyndham.

"The poet thinks that he finds the beautiful, when he himself creates it," answered the slow honeyed tones of the transparent Serafina. Richard Leslie did not quite understand the sentiment, but had a dim perception that he was the poet, and that it was rather flattering, and on the whole he agreed with her.

"As you haven't been to Italy, Captain Montagu," said Mrs. St. John, rather tartly "perhaps

you won't think it artistic and original to admire red hair?"

"If we lived in the days of chivalry," said the beautiful Leicester, "I should sue on bended knee for one dark tress of my lady's hair, which I would wear round my arm instead of the embroidered scarf that fair ladies of the olden time used to weave for their noble knights. How often would it go round?" he murmured in a low voice, as he gazed ardently at the false plaits: "four times at least."

He certainly was a fascinating creature, that Leicester Montagu, with his guitar, and his flaxen moustache, and his washy chivalrous twaddle. Mrs. St. John fervently believed in him. She almost believed in her own plait when he looked at it with those eyes. There was nothing in the world that Augusta St. John had such a genuine horror and mistrust of, as real originality of thought or opinion; although she imagined that there was nothing which she



appreciated so much. She adored all sorts of nasty little poetry, and worshipped the—third? no—fourth rate in art. She talked an immensity about mind, but readily mistook for it what was not even matter, and with a good deal of pretension to refinement and some appearance of it, contrived to combine a coarsish admiration of masculine beauty. When Louisa St. John was in a vicious temper she used to say of her sister-in-law, “Dear Gussa! she likes little talents and big men!” What she really did like best in the world was a bad style of good-looking fair man, who would show undisguised admiration for her clothes and her points; and what she liked next best, was a tedious rector with a good memory and anecdotes of royal personages.

“But in our discussion as to Helen’s looks, we are quite forgetting her singing,” said Miss Sandford. “Do call her in, Richard; she went by the window there to the left, only a minute ago.”

Mr. Leslie vanished through one of the long

windows that opened on the garden, and presently returned with the captured Helen.

"Now, Nelly," said he, "we want you to sing us something."

"But I don't know anything fit to sing, Richard," answered the child,—“nothing good enough ; besides, does Mrs. St. John want me to sing ? ”

"Oh, pray sing at once, Helen, if anybody wishes to hear it," said Mrs. St. John, sourly ; "we don't expect it to be anything very wonderful, so the less fuss you make about it the better."

Helen coloured, and in a low voice again appealed to Richard.

"Oh, Richard, what ? I'm sure I don't know what ! ”

Miss Sandford, who was sitting on the sofa near the spot where Helen stood the picture of shy distress, made room for her, and drew her kindly down by her side.

"What have you heard her sing, Richard?" asked she.

"We'll see presently," was the answer; "in the mean time the fair Serafina shall open the concert."

He made his way across the room to where she was sitting, giving pretty half-refusals to Leicester Montagu, who had been for the last ten minutes soliciting in vain.

"I only sing German," she said, "and the musical taste here"—looking at Richard—"is so very Italian, that——"

"Only mine, only mine," said Mr. Leslie, "and I am such an ignoramus that my opinion ought to go quite for nothing; besides, I thank my stars I am able to like more than one good thing, and so, *liebste, teuerste, verehrteste*, Mrs. Wyndham, come and inspire us all, and if you begin, I'll follow; I'm sure that's a handsome offer."

He stooped down and took her little hands in

his; she looked up at him, and the vapoury blue eyes seemed to melt and lose themselves in the glowing brown ones like drops of dew sucked in by the sun, as with a gentle force that lay more in the eyes than in the hands, he raised her out of the comfortable chair in whose depths her little figure enveloped in cloud-like gauzes lay buried.

“God bless my soul, Mrs. W.! going to sing!” said her husband, waking up suddenly as she passed him. “What are you going to give us, mum? Song old cow died of?” After which marital observation he relapsed into a condition of repose, in which, with Willoughby St. John, he had been indulging ever since they had come in from dinner.

Serafina gave the sleeping just one a look that would have killed him if it could, and swept past him to the pianoforte in injured silence. Richard Leslie took her gloves, the tiniest in the world, and her handkerchief, which was of a coarse



texture and saturated with verbenä, and sat himself down on a low stool just behind her. Laying her hand upon her forehead, as if to recollect, and giving one glance round at Richard Leslie, who was apparently in a fit of complete abstraction, pulling out the fingers of the baby gloves he held, she embarked in a "Wann denkst du mein" of a sentimental and ordinary description, which would have been inoffensive enough, but for a jodeling refrain which broke out at the end of each verse in an entirely unlooked-for and uncalled-for manner. As soon as Mr. Leslie had seen her fairly launched, he took his seat on the other side of Helen; she was looking over a volume of Retsch's outlines which Mrs. Wyndham had brought down with her. Richard took hold of her hand—long, brown, slender, Florentine fingers those, very unlike the pretty little Saxon paw which he had held the minute before.

"There, Nell," said he, "you'll have more

courage now that some one else has broken the ice for you ; unless indeed your genius should be entirely rebuked by the super-excellence of Mrs. Wyndham's performance ; how do you like it ? ”

“ She has a fine quantity of voice,” answered the child, “ but it sounds always the same ; and the words come out just as if she had got a cold in her head, or a potato in her mouth. I don't like it,” she said again, after a pause ; “ it's all puddingy. Give me my hand, Richard, please ; I want to turn over.”

“ Turn over with the other,” he replied. “ Heavens ! what a severe critic you are, child ! and all the more that what you say is so completely within justice ; pudding is exactly what it is. Dreadfully fallen off, isn't she, Hope ? ” he whispered to Miss Sandford.

“ I never liked Mrs. Wyndham's singing myself,” answered Miss Sandford, “ but it seems to me to be very much what it always was, and I

remember the time when you used to admire it considerably more than you appear to do now."

"She sang better then," said he, rather abruptly; "or at all events she sang prettier music—I hate that hideous jodeling."

"Please do give me my hand, Richard," said little Nell; "I want it to turn over."

"What has happened to the other hand, that you can't use it?" again asked he.

She took it from beneath the folds of her gown where it was lying, and under cover of the table mysteriously produced a little pot, over which was tied a large green leaf.

"No more beetles I hope, Nelly," said Miss Sandford, edging a little away from her.

"Oh no, ma'am," said Helen, "they're not beetles; besides, I have got them quite safe, they can't run away."

She lifted a corner of the leaf, and showed them three or four glowworms; while they were

admiring her treasure, Serafina's song came to an end.

"Exquisite! perfectly exquisite!" exclaimed Leicester Montagu, who had been making the agreeable to Mrs. St. John over the tea-table all the time the music was going on, and who now hurried with tea, and bread and butter, to Mrs. Wyndham, which he gracefully dropped upon one knee to present.

There are people who know how to make familiarity respectful; and there are others, who contrive to make an action, deferential in itself, unduly familiar: Leicester Montagu always managed the latter; but vulgar women, who constituted the chief of his clientèle, thought all his little under-bred graces quite too delightful. He gave bread and butter so once to Lady Adela, who remarked audibly to her next neighbour, "I should like to set my foot in his chest."

"Mrs. Wyndham," said Richard, "before I went abroad, you used to sing the loveliest song

in all the world ; it began with ‘Ich deuke dein,’—no, no, I remember, ‘Wann denkst du mein,’ it was ! I do wish you would be amiable enough to sing it.”

“I have this instant finished singing it,” replied Mrs. Wyndham in a tone of considerable pique. “But you have either quite forgotten it, or else you were too deeply engaged to hear it.”

“No, never !” cried he, “quite impossible ! I know it wasn’t that—all yodels are exactly alike, but *my* song began with ‘Wann denkst du mein.’ Why, I remember it as well as possible—as if I had heard it only yesterday, and it used to be quite too lovely, so do be amiable and sing it for me !”

“I am sorry,” she answered, with compressed lips ; “but I have just sung it, and cannot, even to oblige you, inflict a repetition of it upon the whole society.”

“I won’t believe it !” again exclaimed Mr. Leslie. “You know I must have known it again ;

Helen, I appeal to you ;—what were the first words of the song Mrs. Wyndham has just been singing ? ”

“ It began with the words you said,” she replied ; “ something about *denks* and *mein*.”

“ How very extraordinary ! ” he said, laughing and colouring. Mrs. Wyndham coloured, but she did not laugh. She quietly removed her gloves from his keeping, and without a word withdrew, deeply offended, to the other end of the room.

“ Sing away, Nelly ! sing, sing, child, and cover my shameful discomfiture,” ejaculated Mr. Leslie in a low voice. “ Italian, French, German, anything, but make some instantaneous noise, for Heaven’s sake.”

Helen went to the piano and sung the romance of “ Raggio d’amore ” from the “ Furioso ” of Donizetti ; during her performance of which, Leicester Montagu was flirting with Mrs. St. John, and Richard busily engaged in endea-

vouring to smooth the ruffled plumage of the irate Serafina.

She had left the drawing-room and wandered into the conservatory which opened into it, and there he found her bitterly weeping and indignantly refusing the attentions of old Wyndham, who had at last woke up with the cessation of her song, and seeing her disturbed had followed to inquire the cause.

He left the conservatory as Richard entered it.

"She will eat such unwholesome things," he said, shaking his bald head despondingly as they crossed upon the threshold: "twice of that rich pineapple cream upon Scotch ale and lobster salad,—quite sure to make her cry—always does. Now do go and try and persuade her to take a little soda and magnesia—there's a dear good fellow, now do—or I shall have her crying at intervals all through the night."

Richard promised to do his best.

"Isn't it lovely?" said Helen to Miss Sand-

ford when she had finished her song. Don't you like it?"

"Well, I can't say I do very much," said Hope; "but then I know nothing about music, you know, and can only tell what just pleases myself. Is what you have been singing a great favourite of your own?"

"Yes," said Helen, "I think it's lovely."

"What are the words about?" inquired Miss Sandford.

"Love," answered the child,—"*such beautiful desperate words they are,*" she added, with a fervour that made Hope smile.

"You would not laugh if you knew what they meant," said Helen, with great gravity.

"Translate them for me," said Miss Sandford, and Helen began with Southern emphasis and eagerness to declaim and translate for Hope's benefit with very fair success, until she came to the words "*Vieni, l'antico amore, m'arde le fibbre, ingrata, tiranna idolatrata,*" etc., which she put

into very literal and ludicrous English by "It burns my fibres and idolatrized tyrant," at which Hope, who had been from the beginning restraining a great inclination to laugh, went off into such a hearty peal as completely to damp poor little Helen's poetical enthusiasm, and to make her vow in her inmost heart that she would never again scatter her precious pearls before swine.

As soon as Hope perceived how much her ill-timed merriment had discomposed the little girl, she said "Dear little Nelly, you mustn't mind my ways; I am a thorough John Bull, and don't understand sentiment a bit better than I do music. Can't you find me an English ballad out of your store, dear: the Marquis of Montrose's love song, for instance,—now that I do call a right good love song,—or something in honour of that heartless good-for-naught Bonnie Prince Charlie?"

"I know no English," replied the child, in-

stantly won again by Hope's frank kindly manner. "But I can sing a real Irish one that dear old Teddy taught me."

"And who is Teddy?" asked Miss Sandford.

"A Hiberian rat-catcher, and Nell's bosom friend," said Richard Leslie, who having made his peace now came up to the piano.

There was an instant's pause, and then, without any accompaniment, the young voice chanted a pathetic Irish lament, the words of which were as follows :—

"I will dye my petticoat with red,
And round the world I'll beg my bread,
My parents both would wish that I were dead!
Sing mourneen ga dithu, Slaun! Slaun!
Shule! Shule! Shule Agra!
Sing Agus usgarugga, Shule Agra!

When thinking on the time—ah! it's long enough
ago!

Sing mourneen ga dithu, Slaun!

"I will sell my rock and reel,
And I will sell my spinning wheel,

An' all for to buy my love a sword an' a shiel—
Sing mourneen ga dithu, Slaun ! Slaun !
Shule ! Shule ! Shule Agra !
Sing Agus usgarugga, Shule Agra !
When thinking on the time—ah ! it's long enough
ago !
Sing mourneen ga dithu, Slaun !

“ I will climb up yonder hill,
An' there I'll sit an' cry my fill,
Till every tear should turn a mill—
Sing mourneen ga dithu, Slaun ! Slaun !
Shule ! Shule ! Shule Agra !
Sing Agus usgarugga, Shule Agra !
When thinking on the time—ah ! it's long enough
ago !
Sing mourneen ga dithu, Slaun ! ”

The air wandered sadly away, like the sorrowful wandering feet the words described, and there was a whole vague world of dreary memory in the sort of wintry half-smile with which the child sang the “ah ! it's long enough ago !” which recurs, ever more and more dismally, in each successive stanza.

The song ceased, and Helen looked towards Miss Sandford.

Her back was rather turned towards her, and her head completely buried in her knitting.

"Do you like that one better than the last?" at length asked Helen, timidly.

"Trashy twaddle! No, I can't endure it—a pack of idiotic gibberish!" she answered savagely; then, suddenly turning upon Helen a visage bathed in tears—

"Oh, Nelly! Nelly!" she exclaimed in broken accents, "what a sweet, sweet, voice you have, child, and how it does cleave right through one's heart!" And jumping up with an ungovernable emotion of tenderness, she put her arms round the little girl and kissed her.

"Richard, I'll tell you what," she said, wiping her eyes energetically, "I call that first rate. Don't talk to me any more of Mrs. Wyndham's rubbish." And she blew her nose indignantly with a trumpet-like sound. "It's first rate,

that's what it is; and the child has made a perfect fool of me." And she gave a last nervous sob.

"Where in the world did she pick up that low song?" said Mrs. St. John, to Miss Louisa at the other end of the room. "Can't you give us something Italian, Richard," she continued, in a loud voice,—“some sweet little Venetian barcarole, to take those barbarous sounds out of our ears?”

"And do, for mercy's sake, let it be something a little cheery," added Miss Sandford, who couldn't get over a degree of emotion she was quite unused to, and angry with herself about.

Mr. Leslie, greatly diverted at the very various impressions produced by Helen's performance, seized hold of Leicester Montagu's guitar, and began one of the common popular Neapolitan *tarantelle*, the homely refrain of which was:—

"Io darei i miei calzon
Per un piatto di maccheron,"

in which burthen he was joined by Nelly, whose hands and feet and head and eyes were all set going by the marvellous *entrain* of the well-known melody.

"It must be a serenade?" said Mrs. St. John. "There's something about a song—*canzon* means a song, I know. Richard, what does it say about a song?" asked she, raising her voice. "I know *canzon* is a song. I'm sure it must be a serenade," she again said, turning to Captain Montagu.

"Rather a boisterous one," he answered with a contemptuous smile. "Leslie, aw, my dear fellow, do tell us what's that you're singing about a *canzon*? It's in such a horrid patois that one can't make it out." If it had been in purest Tuscan he wouldn't have understood it a bit better. "What's the sentiment, aw, my dear fellow?"

"*Calzon* — *calzon*, not *canzon*," shouted Richard Leslie from the other end of the room.



"I'd give my unmentionables for a plate of macaroni—that's the sentiment, aw, my dear fellow."

Mrs. St. John instantly rose and proposed candles and bed, murmuring to Leicester Montagu as she passed him, that she was miserable that his lovely instrument should have been so desecrated. As they went upstairs Miss Louisa kept saying to Helen, while she administered to her at the same time a series of little pokes in the back, "Never mind, Helen,—never mind; it has been a sad failure, but the fault is not yours. It lies entirely with poor dear Mrs. St. John. She will not remember that she can't make silk purses out of a certain animal's ears. She cannot do it. I always say to her, 'Tracts for the inferior classes—soup, too, if you please,—but *do* remember that silk purses can *not* be made out of a certain animal's ears.' She has not remembered it, and she must abide the consequences—the fault lies entirely with dear Mrs. St. John."

Poor little Helen! her singing experiment had been only just one degree less unfortunate than the dancing experiment of former years.

Heavenly beautiful are some of the still days of closing winter. Soft rainy sunshine lies lovingly on the green level of distant fields.

Against a low dark heaven of almost purple grey, the young twigs stand out in an inextricable mesh of delicate colour. Faint lilacs, tender browns, and where the blood mounts in the veins of the reawakening branches, softest crimsons, dotted here and there with the pale green lights thrown by delusive catkins, making one believe in newborn leaves while yet the boughs are bare.

On these days the whole earth smells of coming violets, and the whole air and the hearts of men are filled with an exquisite presentiment of spring.

Not less lovely in its own way was the

still autumn day on which Richard Leslie and Mrs. Wyndham were slowly pacing up and down the broad terrace at Brankleigh.

It was the reign of *Salvia* and *Lobelia*. Wondrous marigolds in particoloured velvet vests (the gorgeous livery footmen of the garden) and China asters of every hue filled the beds ; while at every turn, mixed with the aromatic odours of these late flowers of the year and the bitter fragrance of dying leaves, came delicious whiffs of *mignonette*, most delicate and most enduring of all the scents of summer. Beyond the terrace lay a belt of beech-trees, every now and then dropping their yellow leaves into the motionless air ; these, again, were crowned with uplands of tawny stubble, and richly coloured new ploughed earth lying in the embraces of a clinging, sunny, silvery autumn mist.

Hope Sandford and Helen were walking too, but faster than the others—Miss Sandford hated dawdling. They had been by way of all start-

ing together, but their disuniting properties and a general tendency of Serafina's towards *tête-à-tête* made them soon fall asunder. They took opposite directions on the terrace, and crossed and recrossed each other at intervals.

"But, my dear child," said Miss Sandford, "do you never do anything but collect beetles and sing love songs? do you never read or learn anything?"

"I do read sometimes," answered Helen, "but I am not allowed to take the books out of the library, and I have only a few of my own, which I have read till I know them almost by heart."

"And which of your books are you fondest of, Nelly?"

"'Faust,' I think," said the child. "I wish I could read it in German; I have only a translation of it. And I have got an old copy of 'Romeo and Juliet' which belonged to papa, and which poor Jacky gave me; and I have got

an odd volume or two of Lord Byron, that belonged to uncle Mackworth, and that got packed up among my things by mistake. Oh, Miss Sandford, don't you like Lord Byron's poetry?"

"Well, no—yes—some of it; but I don't quite think it's the best reading in all the world for you, Nelly. Do you never descend from your altitudes, my dear, and condescend to honest prose?"

"I am very fond of some prose," returned the child, "but I don't care about travels or history. Do you know 'Wilhelm Meister,' Miss Sandford? I like that very much. Mr. William Hetherington had it when he was staying at uncle Mackworth's, and said it was a farrago of sentimental bosh and philosophic twaddle, without beginning, middle, or end, and all about nothing at all; but I liked it, and read it over three times running while he was there. He forgot it when he went away, and when

uncle Mackworth wrote to tell him of it, he said it wasn't worth the expense of the carriage, so I asked for it and got it. Did you ever read 'Wilhelm Meister,' Miss Sandford?" continued the child.

"I tried it once a year or two ago, Nelly, but I believe I agree with your friend Mr. Hetherington about it: it bored me, and the only thing that seemed tolerably clear to me when I had done, was that it was not a particularly good book."

"Why, what is there bad in it, Miss Sandford?" asked Helen.

"Well, my dear, I think the hero himself bad; and if Philina is the heroine, I think she is pretty bad too; and then there's that wretched Mariana——"

(Here the parties crossed. "They are colder and warmer too than they used to be, but not the good eyes of the old days," said Serafina's silvery voice.)

"Oh, poor Mariana, with her faithful loving heart! she wasn't bad," said Nelly, quite excited. "Dear Miss Sandford, goodness is so various."

"No, my dear girl, no," interrupted Hope, "goodness is not various; goodness is one, like the God it comes from."

"But," continued Helen, "I mean that what would be only common, decent, good conduct in one human creature, might become heroic virtue in another. The goodness of resisting evil depends upon the amount of temptation to commit it. I don't think poor Mariana is bad at all; Philina is. But I don't care about all that: all one wants is to be able to believe in the books one reads; they must be a faithful likeness of real things, or else there would be no amusement in them. I hate the good books with a moral at every turn. What use or pleasure is it to me to read of a parcel of dull dolls, who, because they behave in a tolerably

correct civilized way, are rich and prosperous and end with making great marriages? Real people are not like that ; nor the justice of God either, if He is just."

They walked on silently for a few minutes.

"I have been young," said Hope, in a low voice, "and now am old ; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

"Yet papa and mamma," said poor Helen, with her eyes full of tears, "were both good, and they lived miserable and died paupers. And Angel was hunted out of her poor life by a wicked man who is, I dare say, driving in his carriage at this very instant of time."

"Mr. Leslie," said Mrs. Wyndham, "will you pick me that rose? Don't you think it will look well in my hair for dinner to-day?" He stopped and gathered a large crimson queen from one of the late standard rose-trees on the terrace.

"I see you are as fond of flowers as ever, Mrs. Wyndham," he said, as he gave it to her.

"I do not change," observed the lady; "and although this may be a disadvantage in some respects, at least my friends find me where they leave me. Can you say as much?" And the pale eyes shot both tenderness and reproach at him.

"Perhaps not," he replied, rather dejectedly. "As life goes on, one's sphere of experience enlarges, and one's appreciation of things varies greatly; so do one's tastes, so do one's opinions change, as effectually as one's skin does, though perhaps less frequently and at less regular intervals."

"One changes one's skin once in seven years, doesn't one?" said Mrs. Wyndham. "How long is it since we met last, Mr. Leslie?"

"Let me see. I have been away three years. You were at Paris I think the winter before that, which makes four."

"Yes," said she, "and you never thought it worth your while to come and look us up there, although you seemed sorry enough when you parted from us here at Brankleigh."

"Sorry enough, did you say?—too sorry, fairest lady. I could not bring myself to renew such an agony of leave-taking at Paris. Do you see the west lodge gate there?—we had all walked together up to that gate, and there we stood for an instant shaking hands before you got into your carriage."

"You remember it, do you?" said Serafina, almost in a whisper.

"Perfectly," said he; "I remember feeling, too, as if I could have killed you for being as unmoved as you were when you bade me good-bye."

"What would you have had me do?" she answered. "Mrs. St. John, Mr. Wyndham, and a whole host of other people were there. I was obliged to control my feelings."

"Yes," said Richard Leslie, "I know that, but I couldn't control mine, and there was the difference. How drolly one does revel in utter misery before one is full-fledged, doesn't one?"

"Those can afford to revel in misery whose sorrows are unreal: when one's wretchedness is of every day and of all time one ceases to enjoy it quite so much; above all, one shrinks from laying bare one's wounds before unsympathizing souls, and one learns to wear a mask which sometimes deceives even those who ought to know one best."

"So as to obtain a more equal mental balance. Proportion in a mind is a grand thing," said Miss Sandford.

"But I can't reason," replied Helen impetuously, "and I hate analyzing, it does so empty the light out of everything."

Here the parties crossed each other again. "Poor Hope has undertaken rather more than

she will get through, I fancy," said Richard, laughing.

Mrs. Wyndham made no answer, but walked slowly down the steps of the terrace and turned towards the house.

"I hope you are not going in because I have offended you," said he, following her.

"Why should I be offended?" she said coldly. "It is no new thing to me not to be understood. My whole married life has been an apprenticeship to that sort of suffering."



WHEN I AM DEAD.



WHEN I AM DEAD.

BRING no flowers rare
To deck my bed ;
The violets grow above
The hearts of those they love.
Hang no garlands there
When I am dead.

No woeful human groan,
No friends to weep ;
But where I'm lying low
Let the soft spring winds blow,
And doves make lulling moan
And coo me to my sleep.

Lay no stone above
My lonely head.
Lay no stifling tombstone there ;
The flowers will spring up thick and fair ;
The violets love
The early dead.

THE END.





